

القرآن الكريم  
وَمَا لِلدِّينِ هِيَ الْعَالَمِينَ

THE  
**ASCENDANT QUR'AN**  
*Realigning Man to the Divine Power Culture*

VOLUME 8  
Al-Nisā':87-176



Muḥammad Ḥ. al-Āṣī





In the Name of Allah,  
the Mercy-Giving, the Merciful



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**ASCENDANT QUR'AN**

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Al-Nisā':87–176

Muḥammad H. al-Āṣī

THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC THOUGHT  
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Allah (ﷻ) says in His noble Book,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ  
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾

“Verily, Allah and His Angels send salutations on the Apostle. O You who are firmly committed [to Allah], you too [must] send the most worthy salutations and blessings upon him.”  
(Sūrah al-Aḥzāb:56)

In launching this *tafsīr*, we beseech Allah (ﷻ) to bless His final Messenger, Muhammad (ﷺ), all the Prophets (ﷺ) who preceded him, and all those who, despite great difficulty and sacrifice, sincerely follow in their footsteps from the *ṣāliḥīn*, the *ṣiddīqīn*, the *shuhadā'*, and the *marḥūmūn*. We also beseech Allah (ﷻ) to bless and amply reward those who have helped in the publication of this *tafsīr* in whatever capacity.

— The Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought





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## Publisher's Foreword

In this last and final segment of *Sūrah al-Nisā'*, Imam Muḥammad al-Āṣī explains the meanings of *āyāt* 87–176 and the context in which they were revealed. In his inimitable style, he not only explains the historical background but also guides the reader to their application in today's world. Since the Qur'an is Allah's (ﷻ) eternal Word, and relevant for all times, its message must be related to the contemporary historical situation so that committed Muslims can apply it in their lives.

The one theme that is constantly emphasized in these *āyāt* is that of social and political justice. In fact, throughout the majestic Qur'an, this theme permeates all other discourses. In *āyah* 135 of this *sūrah*, the issue of justice is stated with exacting clarity leaving no room for any ambiguity. There is no exemption for anyone when it comes to the issue of justice, whether rich or poor, powerful or weak. With Allah (ﷻ), everyone is equal and equally dealt with in terms of justice. The *āyah* says,

**O you who are securely committed [to Allah]! Be ever vigorous in standing up for equity, bearing witness to**

**the truth for the sake of Allah, even though it be against your own selves or your parents or kinsfolk. Whether the party concerned be rich or poor, Allah's claim takes precedence over [the claims of] either of them (4:135).**

One overriding feature in society that affects the dissemination of justice at the generic as well as institutional levels is the performance of leaders, especially those who are designated by the people to make decisions on their behalf. It is a sad reality of majority Muslim societies that the administration of justice by those in power positions is far removed from the teachings of the noble Book and the standards demonstrated by the noble Messenger (ﷺ). There is one law (or no law) for the rich and another for the poor, the latter category suffering the brunt of its application while the rich and powerful remaining all the while largely immune regardless of the scale or degree of injustices they perpetrate. Such injustices naturally lead to conflict in society and ultimately to its decline and disintegration.

Before proceeding further, it is important to bear in mind that a proper understanding of the divine message is only possible if we take into account the context in which the *āyāt* were revealed. Most, though not all long *sūrah's* of the Qur'an, were revealed in Madinah where the noble Messenger (ﷺ) and his companions were forced to migrate after suffering 13 years of relentless persecution at the hands of the *mushrik* power elite in Makkah. Throughout the Makkan period, the divine message focused primarily on the issue of *tawhīd* (Oneness of Allah – ﷻ), confirmation and reaffirmation of Muhammad as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and the Day of Reckoning after human beings leave this *dunyā* (worldly life). In Madinah, injunctions regarding family, community, social, political, and economic life were revealed. The nascent Muslim community had to deal with real-life issues and Allah (ﷻ) provided guidance in the form of revelations at appropriate times.

*Sūrah al-Nisā'* was revealed between the third and fifth years of the Hijrah. From the *Sīrah* of the noble Messenger (ﷺ) we know

that this period coincided with the Battles of Uḥud (3AH) and al-Aḥzāb (5AH). In Uḥud, after initial success, the Muslims suffered a serious setback including the martyrdom of some 70 companions of the noble Messenger (ﷺ), not the least of which was his uncle and close friend, Ḥamzaḥ ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. On the way to Uḥud, nearly 300 would-be soldiers led by 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy ibn Sallūl, the *uber-munāfiq*, deserted the Muslim forces. This left only 700 companions with the noble Messenger (ﷺ) to confront the Makkan *mushrik* army of 3,000 heavily armed men. The committed Muslims were prepared to face even this challenge and initially scored victories against the Makkan *mushriks* but the tide of battle turned when the Makkan cavalry was able to take advantage of an aberrational bout the Muslims had not with the enemy but with their own consummate commitment to Allah (ﷻ). The opening for this attack was provided when the archers, strategically placed by the noble Messenger (ﷺ) on a hill to ward off a cavalry charge against the vulnerable rearward flank of the Muslims, deserted their posts, thinking they would not get a share of the spoils of war acquired by the advancing Muslims. Of the 50 archers, only 10 or 12 remained true to their responsibility as commanded by the noble Messenger (ﷺ). They were easily overpowered and martyred by the fast-moving Makkan cavalry, led by Khālīd ibn al-Walīd, which then forced the besieged Muslims to fight a two-front battle, wherein decisive victory ultimately eluded them.

Unfortunately Sīrah literature does not provide the names of the vast majority of 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy's 300 confederates, who turned their backs on the noble Messenger (ﷺ) at that critical juncture. The *munāfiq* elements in society, however, exposed their own hand. The emergence of *nifāq* is tied to the establishment of the Islamic state. These fifth columnists, unable to openly challenge the power of the Islamic State, pretend to be Muslims but are in reality in alliance with the forces of *kufr*. Working in tandem with the *kāfirs*, the *munāfiqs* damage the expansion of social justice while moving about within the ranks of Muslims to undermine their morale.

It is noteworthy that there were no *munāfiqs* in Makkah during the 13 years the noble Messenger (ﷺ) spent propagating the

message because Islam did not have power at the time. Instead, the oppressive power structure of Makkah forced some Muslims to hide their *īmān*. In Madinah, however, when Islam began to emerge as the dominant state power, the *munāfiqs* could no longer challenge it openly, and thus they pretended to be Muslims even as their loyalties were with the *mushriks*. The divine light was focused on their behavior in the early part of *Sūrah al-Baqarah* (āyāt 8–20, for instance) as well as in other *sūrah*s of the noble Qur’an such as *Sūrah al-Tawbah*, *al-Nūr* and *al-Munāfiqūn*.

This *sūrah* reveals two types of *munāfiqs*: those who lived in Madinah among Muslims and others who resided in Makkah or elsewhere. The outsiders pretended to be Muslims when they came to Madinah but upon return they would join the fraternity of *mushriks*. From the *Sīrah* of the noble Messenger (ﷺ) we learn that he did not take any punitive action against the *munāfiqs* even though they were well known in society — that is, until they publicly demonstrated their dual-loyalty against the Islamic social order by undermining it or by sedition inimical to the executive command authority of the Prophet (ﷺ). When the *munāfiqs* established Masjid al-Dirār while the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions were away on the military expedition to Tabūk, the returning Muslims and the Prophet (ﷺ) at their helm were commanded to destroy the brick-and-mortar symbol of *nifāq*, a potential base of *fitnah* in Madinah (for details, see *Sūrah al-Tawbah*, āyāt 107–110).

The last segment of *Sūrah al-Nisā’* also deals with examples of people of previous scripture and their experience with fanaticism and dual-loyalty, especially the Yahūdī penchant for discrimination between the uniform message given to all the previous Prophets (ﷺ), and how this affects the performance of just leaders. Even while aware that Muhammad (ﷺ) was the last and final Messenger as foretold in their own books, Yahūdī racism and self-proclaimed exclusivism prevented the larger flock of everyday Jews from accepting the final dispensation he brought to humanity. They insisted that prophethood was the exclusive entitlement of Banū Isrā’īl and no one else. While clinging to this racist notion, they, blinded by their overweening sense of entitlement, had the temer-



ity to exile, or worse yet, murder a number of their own prophets, among them Zakariyā and Yaḥyá (ﷺ).

Unfortunately, some Muslims have also adopted this exclusivist, racist view of themselves as well as of scripture. They use a hadith erroneously attributed to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) that says there will be 72 or 73 factions among Muslims but only one will enter Paradise (or only one will be on the right path). Every pattern of "Muslim" exceptionalism, thinking it does not belong to the history of scripture, automatically assumes that it alone is on the right path and that all others will go to Hell, à la the experience of Ahl al-Kitāb. Some even go so far as to take it upon themselves to "dispatch" these "others" to Hell. The chaos that has engulfed some parts of the Muslim world is the direct result of this mindset.

Closely related to this is the view that a particular sect of Muslims is the "best" and that its followers are sufficiently favored by God so that they need not learn from the mistakes of those who were engaged with scripture in the past. When the Qur'an talks about the error or deviation of people of previous scripture and the punishment that befell them, implicit in this message is the warning that Muslims too would face divine retribution if they adopt a non-inclusivist attitude to Allah's (ﷻ) messages and historical reminders. Allah (ﷻ) has no favorites; people will be judged on the basis of their actions as well as intentions. In the Qur'an, the expression *al-ladhīna āmanū* (the securely committed Muslims) is often followed by *wa-'amilū al-ṣāliḥāt* (those who validate their secure commitment with appropriate deeds).

In pursuit of establishing the Islamic state — the natural habitat of Muslims — the committed Muslims may be required to undertake a *hijrah* from their place of birth to an unfamiliar land. Once the Islamic state is established it must be secured with all means available including combat preparations, preferably on par with the enemy. *Hijrah* and jihad are in fact interrelated. Often, *hijrah* arouses the aggressive tendencies of the enemies of Islam in even more virulent form. They wage war against Muslims with a view to eliminating the Islamic state before it consolidates its power position in society. This is what the early Muslims led by the

noble Messenger (ﷺ) experienced once they migrated to Madinah. They achieved victories and suffered setbacks but since they were steadfast in their commitment to Allah (ﷻ), they gradually became mature enough to realize that the lessons learned from defeat were the platform upon which ultimate success would finally rest. Just as in the past, Muslims today will have to go through a similar trial-by-fire experience in their quest to establish the Islamic social, political, and economic order. There are no shortcuts in this struggle as this divine Writ shows.

Extremist tendencies in the past and present have caused people to break up into exclusionary domains protected by standing armies, thus compromising the training and preparation of qualified people to do the job of adjudicating, maintaining, and expanding social justice in society. Unlike the God-denying modernity — presented as Western civilization — there is an Islamic order of things defined by enlightenment and teachings of scripture that originate from Allah (ﷻ). A thousand years before Western civilization assumed its international “duties,” Islam was the modulator of social and human relations. This was done as a matter of obeying Allah (ﷻ), and not because Muslims found themselves reacting to other power centers or adjusting to a balance-of-power equation. Muslims at that time were initiators of social action, social change, and social progress. The Muslims developed a social consciousness of the political forces and special interests that were at work around them and even within them.

This Islamic social consciousness, which derives from understanding the Qur’an and is therefore centered around the pillar of justice, is what propelled the Muslims to lead the way and shape the future. A world full of injustice populated by rival powers that were only interested in theoretically accepting the principles of justice did not deter these pioneering Muslims; what they were concerned with is the practical pursuit of justice in all the societies they went to.

There is a body of information interspersed throughout this guiding Book that shows humanity the way through its most challenging problems — problems and issues pertaining to war, truce, alliances, neutrality, and peace.

In this series of *āyāt*, the Muslim disposition of preferring peace to war is put on display: the responsible Muslims are counseled to deal equitably with those non-Muslims who have entered into a treaty affiliation with the Islamic state. The *āyāt* also stress that non-Muslims of neutrality should not be harmed and if they offer “peace,” it should not be rejected simply because they are non-Muslims. The contrast with the attitude toward *munāfiqs* is striking. While they should be kept under watch and Muslims are called upon to be on guard against them, physical retribution is only commanded if they act against the social justice imperatives of the Islamic state or cause sedition in society.

As in many other *sūrah*s of the noble Qur’an, this *sūrah* also deals with the issue of *shirk* — assembling rivals to or competitors with Allah’s (ﷻ) divinity (omnipotence) and authority (lawmaking). Often, under the influence of certain vested interests, self-proclaimed “Islamic” gatekeepers have dumbed down the meaning of *shirk* to the condemnation of those millions who are forced into gravesites and mausoleums to “find” God while giving a pass to those millionaires who prevent God from being found in the halls of justice. This means that the serious, more grave forms of *shirk* are ignored. These latter forms are on exhibit as the naming of holy precincts after families or putting in abeyance the laws of Allah (ﷻ) by giving preference to tribal customs and *‘aṣabīyah*s. Even a more serious form of *shirk* is their subservience to the power of *kufr* as represented today by imperialism and Zionism. It must be remembered that only Allah (ﷻ) is the Lawgiver; man as His vicegerent and representative on earth is the law-observer. Man’s authority is limited to interpreting and implementing the laws of Allah (ﷻ), not overriding them (if that was even possible in any kind of lasting sense).

One final point is in order. Throughout these *tafsīr* volumes, the aim has been to provide discerning Muslims a proper understanding of the Qur’an so that they can shape their behavior in accordance with Allah’s (ﷻ) guidance. This is especially crucial for emerging leaders of the Islamic movement who are expected to contribute to the emergence of a consolidated Islamic state. They

are the ones who will be tasked with organizing societies on the basis of justice and equity. No feature of human society impacts the dissemination, adjudication, and maintenance of social justice more than the performance of competent leaders. A faulty understanding of the divine Book has led in the past to many unfortunate developments and will no doubt do so in the future as well. Muslims, especially those in leadership positions, have to be properly grounded in the divine message in order to regenerate the Islamic civilization that was so tragically subverted soon after the period of al-Khilāfah al-Rāshidah.

The challenges that lie ahead are not small, but struggle in the Islamic movement and establishing the Islamic state was never an easy task. The challenges the noble Messenger (ﷺ) faced were far greater and more severe than what the Muslims of today face. Just as the noble Messenger (ﷺ) turned the *jāhil* people of Arabia into the finest human beings through a proper understanding of the Qur'an and his own exemplary character, the current generation of Muslims will be able to reproduce those results if they follow the same process.

This *tafsīr* series is part of that effort. Imam al-Āṣī's explanations of the *āyāt* of the Qur'an have been ably edited by Br. Afeef Khan to make them more accessible to the average reader. Detailed endnotes have been provided to enable the more scholarly to satiate their thirst for knowledge and to pursue their research activities with ease. Many thanks are also due to the efforts of Br. Imran Khan in providing timely and expeditious proofreading of the many pages in this volume.

We pray to Allah (ﷻ) to accept this humble effort from us and to make it a source of guidance and understanding so that Muslims can return to the noble Book of Allah (ﷻ) in the way it was intended. We recognize that the task we have undertaken is difficult, indeed monumental. The road ahead is full of hazards but we have set out with sincere intentions and a firm conviction, and are thereby confident that Allah (ﷻ) in His infinite mercy will provide the means to enable us to take it to fruition. We thank the many readers who have given and continue to give input regarding

this *tafsīr*. Similarly, we thank all those who have helped in whatever way possible to make this project possible. Their reward is with Allah (ﷻ). May He, the Most Merciful Lord and Sustainer, multiply their contributions many times over. *Āmīn*.

Zafar Bangash

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Rabi' al-Thānī 9, 1435AH (2-9-2014CE)



## List of Honorifics

Honorifics are the words expressed by every Muslim when the name of Allah (ﷻ), the name of the Prophet (ﷺ), and the names of Allah's previous Prophets (ﷺ) are mentioned, spoken, or written. These are placed in parentheses after the name of each of the above is expressed. They are known to nearly every Muslim; however as this is an English-language *tafsīr* meant for a largely English-speaking audience that may have little experience with this kind of Islamic etiquette, the list below identifies the ones used throughout this volume, along with their meanings and specific usages.



*subhānahu wa-ta'ālā* (Exalted and August is He): used for Allah alone.



*ṣallā allāhu 'alayhi wa-ālihi wa-sallam* (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him and his family): used for Muhammad in any and all of his designations, such as *Messenger of Allah*, *the Prophet*, *the Messenger*, *Rasūl-Allah*, etc.



*'alayhi al-salām* (peace be upon him): used for every other prophet; masculine singular.



*'alayhim al-salām* (peace be upon them): used for all other prophets; inclusive plural, masculine and feminine.



*'alayhā al-salām* (peace be upon her): used for Eve, the wife of Adam, and for Mary, the mother of Jesus, among others; feminine singular.



*'alayhimā al-salām* (peace be upon them both): used for any combination of two prophets, for Adam and Eve, or for Mary and Jesus together; inclusive dual, masculine and feminine.



# Transliteration Chart

## Consonants

أ	none (initial)	ض	ḍ
ؤ	' (medial or final)	ط	ṭ
ب	b	ظ	ẓ
ت	t	ع	‘
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	ḥ	ق	q
خ	kh	ك	k
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	ه	h
س	s	ة	ḥ
ش	sh	و	w
ص	ṣ	ي	y

## Vowels and Diphthongs

□	a	ا□	ā	□ى	á
□	u	□آ	ā	□ئى	ay
□	i	□و	ū	□ؤ	aw
		□ى	ī		

The small box in the table above represents an Arabic consonant; for instance, if the box were replaced with the letter *f* (ف), then the table would assume the following configuration,

ف□	fa	فَآ	fā	فَئى	fá
ف□	fu	فَآ	fā	فَئى	fay
ف□	fi	فُؤ	fū	فُؤ	faw
		فِئى	fī		

## Tanwīn and Tashdīd

□	an	□ى	ayy	□و	aww
□ى	an	□و	ūw	ف	ff
□	un	□ى	īy (medial)	ش	shsh
□	in	□ى	ī (final)	ر	rr

Similarly, if the box were replaced with the letter *f* (ف), then the table above would look like the following,

فَآ	fan	فَئى	fayy	فَؤ	faww
فِئى	fan	فُؤ	fūw	ف	ff
ف□	fun	فِئى	fīy (medial)	ش	shsh
ف□	fin	فِئى	fī (final)	ر	rr

## 4

# Sūrah al-Nisā', Part 3

## Women

This lesson begins with a reminder of Allah’s (ﷻ) uniqueness and particularity — as He is the cornerstone of man’s concepts and conceptualization when it comes to societal affairs. When progressing Muslims secure this point of reference in their minds, they are better equipped and more motivated to move forward with the words of inspiration that follow, especially after they realize that being at odds with exploitative social structures and oppressive nations, which have broken loose from scripture and sound reasoning, requires them to refer to Allah (ﷻ). The Qur’an puts the committed Muslims on notice, that they themselves have two attitudes when they are facing the *munāfiqs* — the less-than-faithful individuals who will break away at any moment from the Islamic society and system if the *kāfirs* and *mushriks* prove to be decisively triumphant. Whenever the words of scripture carry within them the potential of a “law,” the moral Muslim masses are reminded of the fact that it is Allah (ﷻ) who regulates the affairs of society and that they are His struggling servants who are trying their best to ensure His will takes its course.

From understanding these and many similar *āyāt*, the Muslims, through their mental integration into the scriptural meanings intended for them, are developing a consciousness of segments and strata of their own society. This “social consciousness” comes from day-to-day contact with ordinary people and from the way individuals and groups of individuals interact with or react to Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ). People in an Islamic society are classified as to the manner in which they respond or despond to Allah (ﷻ), His Scripture, and His Messenger (ﷺ). Committed Muslims are organized and disciplined; then, by necessity, they are required to develop a social consciousness of people and how people refer and relate to Allah (ﷻ). Committed Muslims have to be cognizant of the fact that they are in a position to show others the way into the future; hence, if Muslims are to engage in international relations they are required to have a keen understanding of sub-national responsibilities. In all these overarching and interlocking human dynamics, issues are attended by tension, arbitration, misunderstandings, a resort to force, and sometimes all-out war. And if the reference in all this is not to Allah (ﷻ), then Muslims are no different than other scriptureless societies: guessing and eventually going around in the endless circles of man-made philosophies and humanly designed ideologies.

Western civilization claims to bear the burden of mankind in our time. It has set up all types of international organizations that burn white hot with every flavor of symbolism, but wash out in the field. This Western civilization has spent the last three centuries working on international relations, international law, and international cooperation, but the end result has been colonialism, imperialism, and Zionism. We, the world population, have gone from cold wars to hot wars, from gunpowder to nuclear power, and from civil wars to star wars. None of this Western secularism has been substantially concerned with establishing universal economic justice or a demilitarization that will lead to an eventual de-escalation of warfare. Even the elaborate system of nations that was set up by Western powers means nothing when thermonuclear powers speak. The hard fact of the matter is that they do not refer, and have never referred, their decisions to the divine Authority.

Unlike this God-denying modernity — presented as a Western civilization — there is an Islamic order of things defined by enlightenment and teachings of scripture that originate from Allah (ﷻ). A thousand years before Western civilization assumed its international “duties,” Islam was the modulator of social and human relations. This was done as a matter of obeying Allah (ﷻ), and not because Muslims found themselves reacting to other powers centers or adjusting to a balance-of-power equation. Muslims at that time were initiators of social action, social change, and social progress. The Muslims developed a social consciousness of the political forces and special interests that were at work around them and even within them. This Islamic social consciousness, which derives from understanding the Qur’an and is therefore centered around justice, is what propelled the Muslims to lead the way and define the future. A world full of injustice did not deter these pioneering Muslims whether the other powers around were going to theoretically accept the principles of justice or not; what they were concerned with is the practical pursuit of justice in all the societies they went to.

There is a body of information interspersed throughout this guiding Book that shows humanity the way through its most challenging problems — problems and issues pertaining to war, truce, alliances, neutrality, and peace. In this stretch of *āyāt*, a scriptural social consciousness is nurtured with regard to:

1. dual-loyalists (*munāfiqs*) who did not reside in the Islamic State in Madinah;
2. those who had entered into a treaty with the Islamic State;
3. non-Muslims of neutrality who had no interest in fighting against the Islamic State or even in fighting as conscripts within the military of their own country;
4. people who would conveniently play around with ideological convictions, appearing to be “committed Muslims” when they were in the Islamic State in Madinah but assuming a *kāfir* identity once they returned to Makkah; and
5. accidental or inadvertent bloodshed among Muslims, as well as intentional killing among Muslims, other peoples, and within other societies.

In all these cases Allah (ﷻ) offers the committed Muslims procedures and regulations that do justice to the condition at hand.

## Muslim-on-Muslim Violence Is Indicative of *Nifāq*

- (4:87) Allah — there is no deity except Him; He will surely gather you all together for the Day of Resurrection, [the coming of ] which is beyond all doubt: and whose word could be truer than Allah's?
- (4:88) How, then, could you be of two minds about the *munāfiqs*, seeing that Allah [Himself] has disowned them because of their guilt? Do you, perchance, seek to guide those whom Allah has let go astray — when for him whom Allah lets go astray you can never find any way?
- (4:89) They would love to see you deny the truth even as they have denied it, so that you would be like them. Do not, therefore, take them for your allies until they forsake the domain of evil for the sake of Allah; and if they revert to [open] enmity, seize them and slay them wherever you may find them. And do not take any of them for your ally or giver of support,
- (4:90) Unless it be such [of them] as have ties with people to whom you yourselves are bound by a covenant, or such as come to you because their hearts shrink from [the thought of] making war either on you or on their own folk — although, if Allah had willed to make them stronger than you, they would certainly have made war on you. Thus, if they let you be, and do not make war on you, and offer you peace, Allah does not allow you to harm them.
- (4:91) You will find [that there are] others who would like to be safe from you as well as safe from their own folk, [but who] whenever they are faced anew with temptation to evil, plunge into it headlong. Hence, if they do not let you be, and do not offer you peace, and do not stay their hands, seize them

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لِيَجْمَعَنَّكُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَمَنْ  
 أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حَدِيثًا ﴿٨٧﴾ فَمَا لَكُمْ فِي الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِتْنَةٍ وَاللَّهُ أَرْكَسَهُمْ  
 بِمَا كَسَبُوا أَتْرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَهْدُوا مَنْ أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ  
 تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا ﴿٨٨﴾ وَدُّوْا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ كَمَا كَفَرُوا فَتَكُونُونَ سَوَاءً فَلَا  
 تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ حَتَّىٰ يَهَاجِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَخُذُوهُمْ  
 وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ وِلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿٨٩﴾  
 إِلَّا الَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ أَوْ جَاءُوكُمْ حَصِرَتْ  
 صُدُورُهُمْ أَنْ يَقْتُلُوكُمْ أَوْ يُقَنِّلُوكُمْ قَوْمَهُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَسَلَّطَهُمْ  
 عَلَيْكُمْ فَلَقْتُلُوكُمْ فَإِنْ أُعْتَزَلُوكُمْ فَلَمْ يُقَنِّلُوكُمْ وَأَلْقَوْا إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامَ فَمَا  
 جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩٠﴾ سَتَجِدُونَ ءَاخِرِينَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ  
 يَأْمَنُوكُمْ وَيَأْمَنُوا قَوْمَهُمْ كُلًّا مَا رُدُّوْا إِلَى الْفِتْنَةِ أُرْكَسُوا فِيهَا فَإِنْ لَمْ  
 يَعْتَزَلُوكُمْ وَيَلْقَوْا إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامَ وَيَكْفُوْا أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ  
 حَيْثُ تَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَأُولَئِكَ جَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنًا مُّبِينًا ﴿٩١﴾ وَمَا  
 كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ أَنْ يَقْتُلَ مُؤْمِنًا إِلَّا خَطَاً وَمَنْ قَتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا خَطَاً  
 فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ وَدِيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَصَدَّقُوا

فَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَدُوِّ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ  
 مُؤْمِنَةٍ وَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ  
 فَدِيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ، وَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ فَمَنْ لَمْ  
 يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ تَوْبَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ  
 عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُّتَعَمِّدًا  
 فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَغَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ  
 وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٣﴾ يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ  
 فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ أَلْقَىٰ إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامَ  
 لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا تَبْتَغُونَ عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ  
 مَغَانِمٌ كَثِيرَةٌ كَذَلِكَ كُنْتُمْ مِّن قَبْلُ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ  
 عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١٤﴾

and slay them whenever you come upon them: for it is against these that We have clearly empowered you [to make war].

- (4:92) And it is not conceivable that a committed Muslim should slay another committed Muslim, unless it be by mistake. And upon him who has slain a committed Muslim by mistake there is the duty of freeing a committed Muslim from bondage and paying an indemnity to the victim's relations, unless they forgo it by way of charity. Now if the slain, while



himself a committed Muslim, belonged to a people who are at war with you, [the penance shall be confined to] the freeing of a committed Muslim from bondage; whereas, if he belonged to a people to whom you are bound by a covenant, [it shall consist of] an indemnity to be paid to his relations in addition to the freeing of a committed Muslim from bondage. And he who does not have the wherewithal shall fast [instead] for two consecutive months. [This is] the atonement ordained by Allah: and Allah is indeed all-knowing, wise.

- (4:93) But whoever deliberately slays another committed Muslim, his requital shall be Hell, therein to abide; and Allah will condemn him, and will reject him, and will prepare for him awesome suffering.
- (4:94) [Hence], O you who are committed [to Allah's power presence], when you go forth [to war] in Allah's cause, use your discernment, and do not — out of a desire for the fleeting gains of this worldly life — say to anyone who offers you the salutation of peace, "You are not a committed Muslim," for with Allah there are gains abundant. You, too, were once in the same condition — but Allah has been gracious to you. Use, therefore, your discernment: verily, Allah is always cognizant of what you do (al-Nisā':87-94).

Before relating any information pertaining to peculiar social incidents, Allah (ﷻ) focuses the committed Muslim's attention on the one overriding fact he often overlooks,

**Allah — there is no authoritative deity except Him; He will most certainly assemble you all together for the Day of Resurrection, [the coming of] which is beyond all doubt: and whose speech is more authentic than Allah's? (4:87).**

The first acknowledgment in the legal profession is to acknowledge the source of law. Regardless of human feelings and

convictions on the one hand and the prerogatives of human power flaunters on the other, Allah (ﷻ) is the ultimate and consummate source of law. People in the prevailing materialistic cultural and political landscape are liberal in admitting that God is the source of morals but they are stingy in admitting that God is also the source of laws. Allah (ﷻ) constitutes life itself and it is only He who qualifies to nurture life in individuals and in society. His words are nourishment to human souls and citizenries. He is equally qualified to organize both human biological functions and man's sociological imperatives. The morals that man learns from Allah (ﷻ) give meaning to the laws he receives from Him. Together these morals and laws are the backbone of communities in small regions as well as larger, more interactive communities on a global scale.

This introductory *āyah* is important in many ways, not the least of which is that it prefaces a legal arrangement. To begin with, humanity is reminded that it is in a social and developmental advancement toward an “end life” — the *ākhirah*. Human beings are to consciously deal with their worldly responsibilities knowing they will be amassed on the Day of Judgment. This judgement will bring to account all their actions, decisions, and arrangements in this immediate, sensuous world. So in this sequential alignment of activities, relationships, involvements, and culmination, a Muslim decision maker is intensely conscious of Allah (ﷻ) and the Final Day; in particular the upholders of the law on earth are especially alert to the fact that they interpret divine law with a view to extending it into the social milieu. They neither violate it nor annul it. The disposition of the expectation of accountability to Allah (ﷻ) as the impartial source of justice is qualitatively different from the secular lawmakers of the materialistic world who forge laws to rationalize a “justice” that serves the higher interests of those with accumulated wealth, concentrated power, or both, **“And whose discourse could be more genuine than Allah’s?”**

### ***Nifāq* Is a Subcategory of *Kufr***

With these and preceding *āyāt*, everyone is reminded about the matter of referring social and legal issues to Allah (ﷻ); thereby the Qur'an moves on to take issue with human beings who “soft-peddle” the pathology of dual loyalties, ideological betrayal, and fifth columns. Socially conscious, committed Muslims are inspired by these words of this guiding Book to be unwavering and unyielding toward these turncoats and hypocrites (*munāfiqs*). Muslims should not be of “two schools of thought” when it comes to disloyal Muslim citizens and traitors who cooperate with the enemy forces determined to undermine or destabilize an Islamic society and state, even though in this case it appears that these betrayers were geographically located outside of the territorial boundaries of the Islamic State of Madinah. A point to keep in mind here is that the revelation of these *āyāt* is an indication of the composition of the Islamic society in Madinah, where the committed Muslims were still not of “one mind” in dealing with the treacherous *munāfiqs* in their midst. These *āyāt* also infer how important it is for the Muslims to develop a social consciousness that can define traitors, weed them out, and give them ultimatums if necessary. Persons who are traitors and collaborators, informers and moles should, per these Qur'anic instructions, feel the heat of a mass Islamic public consciousness as to their presence and tendencies. At times, enlightened and responsible Muslims may have to purposefully allow these *munāfiqs* to proceed on their treacherous course in order to expose them and their connections. And so Allah (ﷻ) says in these *āyāt* of social consciousness,

**How, then, could you be of two minds when it comes to the *munāfiqs*, seeing that Allah [Himself] has revoked them because of their guilt? Do you [the committed Muslims], perchance, seek to guide those [*munāfiqs*] whom Allah has diverted [because of their guilty conscience] — when can you ever give direction to those whom Allah has diverted? They [the *munāfiqs*] would love to see you [the committed Muslims]**

deny Allah [and His power] even as they have denied it, so that you and they become the same. Do not, then, take them [the *munāfiqs*] for your allies until they seek political asylum on a course [of struggle] to Allah; and if they revert to [open] enmity, seize them and kill them wherever you may find them. And do not take any of them [the *munāfiqs*] for your ally or provider of aid... (4:88–89).

This *āyah* obviously speaks about two sets of people: the committed Muslims and the “Muslims” whose ultimate loyalty belongs neither to Allah (ﷻ) nor His Prophet (ﷺ). According to one narrative, this *āyah* was revealed in the context of the Battle of Uḥud, for which the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) had set out on a military campaign with an army of Muslims. As this army was en route to the battleground, a contingent of Muslims withdrew from the military assignment they had earlier committed to, and returned to Madinah. The mass of committed Muslims around the Prophet (ﷺ) reacted to this in two separate ways: one group said, “We should kill the deserters [who returned to Madinah],” while the other group defended the defectors, “No! They are committed Muslims!” To this contrasting behavior of Muslims around Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ), Allah (ﷻ) revealed, “**How, then, could you be of two minds about the *munāfiqs*?**” Corroborating the *āyah*, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “*But this is a boon. This [event] filters out what is foul as a bellows [blower] rids iron of its contamination.*”<sup>440</sup>

According to another narrative, this set of *āyāt* talks about a host of people who publicized their Islam, but in terms of their political attachment, were advocates of the Makkan *mushriks*. On one occasion these people left Makkah on an errand, saying, “If we were to come upon Muhammad’s people we have nothing to worry about [that is, they publicly professed their Islam, so Muhammad’s followers would accept them as Muslims]...” When news of these people reached Madinah a segment of committed Muslims said, “We should go out to these cowards and fight them; they are, after all, the allies of the enemies [Makkah’s *mushriks*].” Another portion

of committed Muslims in Madinah said, "Praise Allah! Are you going to fight and kill people who have adopted your [religious] language? And you are going to justify your act by saying that they did not seek political asylum [as we did in Madinah]? Is it because they did not leave their homes that we are to shed their blood and possess their belongings?" This amounted to a clash of two public opinions within the Islamic society in Madinah. Mind you, the Prophet (ﷺ) was there, among them, privy to this contention, but had thus far expressed nothing conclusive to settle the matter one way or the other. At this point of human divergence in the Islamic society of Madinah under the leadership and guardianship of Muhammad (ﷺ), Allah (ﷻ) clarified the definitive Islamic position, **"How, then, could you [the committed Muslims in Madinah] be of two mindsets about the *munāfiqs*..."**<sup>441</sup>

The difference between these two narratives is that the former one speaks about the *munāfiqs* within an Islamic state (Madinah), whereas the latter one refers to the *munāfiqs* outside of an Islamic state ("Muslims" in Makkah). Without trying to be judgmental about which of the two is the unequivocal context for the instructions in this lesson, the apparent fact is that there was never an "executive" order to launch into an armed conflict against the *munāfiqs* in Madinah; the Prophet (ﷺ) did not fight them and did not give any orders to the Muslims to fight them. The higher policy was to deal with them in a form of benign neglect, leaving it up to the social consciousness of the Muslim public to disregard and disapprove of them. The insightful instructions of the Prophet (ﷺ) were crafted to undermine the support system these *munāfiqs* relied upon, especially their ties to the Yahūd. It was the Yahūd who were the inspiration and the refuge for these *munāfiqs* of Madinah. Moreover, this Yahūdī support system throughout the Arabian Peninsula gave these *munāfiqs* the impetus to break away from the Islamic leadership, the Islamic social mainstream, and the Islamic authority. Contrasting with the Islamic policy for the *munāfiqs* of Madinah, the *āyāt* give different instructions for the *munāfiqs* outside of Madinah, that is, those who are obviously not city dwellers in the Islamic State of Madinah: to take them as captives, or to kill them on

sight wherever they may be. The *āyah* is vocal insofar as it tells the Islamic movement not to link up with these types of “Muslims” [*munāfiqs*] in any political or military plan until they make a transition away from being geographically and emotionally committed to the *kāfirs*,

**Do not, therefore, take them for your allies until they relocate from the jurisdiction of *kufr* — for the cause of Allah; and if they revert to [open] enmity, seize them and kill them wherever you may find them... (4:89).**

This, clearly, amounts to an ultimatum: these *munāfiqs* have to cease and desist their trafficking with the *kāfirs* and *mushriks*. Some of them, consequently, may have actually broken their ties with the *kāfirs* of Makkah; thus, Muhammad (ﷺ) did not actually dispatch an armed force that would implement these instructions. The use of the word *yuhājirū* (abandon the abode of *kufr*) indicates that the people intended by this *āyah* were not (at that particular point in time) the residents of Madinah, or to put it in contemporary terminology, citizens of the Islamic State. The proof of an Islamic identity then (and now) was less related to what one professed, but what one did in the manner of becoming a member of the Islamic movement, authority, and state. All this obviously was taking shape before the eventual liberation of Makkah. Per these *āyāt*, the Islamic momentum was defining as *munāfiqs* all nominal Muslims who had not become active members in the struggle and liberation movement led by Muhammad (ﷺ). Furthermore, all of these *munāfiqs*, who by a lack of political and practical allegiance to Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ), are defined by this Qur’an as being on the side of the *kāfirs*.

The next lesson delivers harsh words in reference to all those token Muslims who remain in the jurisdiction of *kufr*, failing to join and support their sacrificing brothers of commitment and dedication who had already taken Islam to its political heights and practical meanings. Makkah at that time was the fountainhead of hostilities, the center of conspiracies, and the base for attacks

against the Islamic State in Madinah; thus being citizens of this type of Makkah was not consistent with being loyal to the authority of Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ). The likely allusion in these *āyāt* is to the *munāfiqs* who lived in Makkah or who did not live in Madinah, Makkah being the base of *kufr* and Madinah the base of Islam. These were the ones who paid lip service to Islam but were in actual fact the functionaries of *kufr* and the agents of God-denying authorities; their words were supportive of Islam while their actions belied the true depth of their anti-Islamic convictions.

Building on this down-to-earth background, the reader may now be ready to reach for some of the more penetrating meanings,

**How, then, could you be of two minds concerning the *munāfiqs*, seeing that Allah [Himself] has disowned them because of their guilt? Do you, perchance, seek to guide those whom Allah has caused to deviate — when he whom Allah lets go astray you can never find a way? They would love to see you deny Allah even as they have denied Him, so that now everyone is equal! Do not, therefore, take them for your allies until they abandon the jurisdiction of *kufr* on a course to Allah; and if they revert to [open] enmity, seize them and kill them off wherever you may find them. And do not take any of them as your ally or as your supporter (4:88–89).**

The *āyah*'s text exposes the public pretense of those Muslims who should know better. As obvious as it might be to the contrary, the compact society of *imān* in Madinah under the able leadership and counsel of Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) found itself splitting into two divergent views concerning incognito criminals who, when armor meets armor, are on the side of *kufr*. In these *āyāt*, the Qur'an expresses amazement at how some Muslims fall into the mistake of vouching for their own on the basis of what they say and not on the basis of what they do. In an expression of helping the Muslims to distinguish between those who were committed to Allah's (ﷻ) authority and those who were not, the Prophet (ﷺ) is known to have said,

“Not from us is he who proclaims the cause of ‘*aṣabīyah* [group solidarity], and not from us is he who fights for ‘*aṣabīyah*, and not from us is he who dies for ‘*aṣabīyah*.” Wāthilah ibn al-Asqa‘ al-Laythī Abū Fasilah (one of the listeners around him) asked, “And what is [the meaning of] this ‘*aṣabīyah*?” To which the Prophet (ﷺ) replied, “To assist your own people in [the pursuit of] injustice.”<sup>442</sup>

The expressions of the Qur’an here make the listening Muslims more sensitive, more decisive, and more forthright in identifying people who say one thing and do another. Consequently, social Islamic attitude and behavior should become a bloc disapproval of ideological deserters who wrap themselves up with Islamic words and ceremonial rituals.

This demonstrates to the committed Muslims that, human nature being what it is, in their Islamic society, a faction of people will direct some sympathy toward overt Muslims, who are in the determination of Allah (ﷻ) covert *munāfiqs*. The issue of *nifāq* and *munāfiqs* will remain illusive and “controversial” so long as the Muslims remain naive by not growing into the consciousness that comes with understanding and implementing this Qur’an. Some individuals belonging to a certain class of people in society run away from the struggle associated with a commitment and devotion to Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ). This runaway attitude brings with it a dismissal of key concepts found in this holy Text, a significant one of which is the concept of *nifāq*. How is it possible for committed Muslims, who are encountering the consequences attending the deadly opposition of *kufr* and who are paying dearly for their loyalty and dedication to Islam, to simultaneously deal with other Muslims who say, “Revere Allah (ﷻ)! How are you going to fight and kill people who are in the same religious vernacular as you [the Muslims] are? Are you going to do that to them just because they have not abandoned the domain of *kufr* and have not left their homes [and families] behind? Are you going to spill their blood and repossess their property because of that?”

These are the type of people who believe that Islam is only a vocal phenomenon, a verbal commitment, or a theoretical construct. They did not consider very closely what the *munāfiqs* them-



selves said, "If we come across the companions of Muhammad we have nothing to worry about!" They did not work into their thoughts the fact that these "verbal Muslims" (*munāfiqs*) were known to be supporters of the enemies of the Muslims in Madinah. This is the type of twisted definition that derails the jihad of those who give their lives for Allah (ﷺ). *Īmān* itself becomes an abstract concept when this type of spin takes hold. When there is a war in progress against the Islamic state and Islamic self-determination, nothing counts as much as firmness of character and clarity of purpose. The shining lesson from these *āyāt* is that whenever a particular group of "limelight" Muslims publicly issues sweet words of support, but who, by their own "schedules" and "programs," are committed to the establishment of *kufṛ*, then this behavior merits for them the designation of *munāfiqs* par excellence. This inconsistency and betrayal of trust cannot be tolerated in a serious society of struggling Muslims. Once there is even an inclination toward these *munāfiqs* the whole concept of *dīn* is watered down. This attitude, though it finds some devotees in an Islamic society, is the one this lesson is disclaiming.

However, with the *munāfiqs* who were physically inside the first Islamic State in Madinah, the above approach was modified. Within the confines of an Islamic society and under the authority of an Islamic government, the internal *munāfiqs* were treated in a manner that emphasized alienating and cutting them off from their source of inspiration and revenue. The problem, typically, with the *munāfiqs* on the outside is that an Islamic state has no power to direct and determine their movements. This physical distance between an Islamic state and its Islamic members on one side, and the nominal Muslims (*munāfiqs*) who are citizens of a state of *kufṛ* and who emit two conflicting signals — a verbal one that is Islamic and a practical one that is *kāfir* — on the other side causes the distant Muslims within an Islamic state to develop conflicting attitudes.

Obviously, in this situation there were those outside the Islamic state who expressed with their tongues what is considered by any measurement the minimum by which a person becomes a "Muslim," "We bear witness that there is no deity except Allah, and

we bear witness that Muhammad is His Messenger.” But having said that, their agenda and their day-to-day activities expressed something louder: they were working for the force, the regime, or the government that was at war with the Islamic state and the Islamic society around Muhammad (ﷺ). This would mean that if the *kāfirs* ever needed the service of such “Muslims,” they could be relied upon to deliver wherever and whenever necessary. When all this is a fact of life, and there are some Muslims “identifying” with *munāfiqs*, then it can only be Allah’s (ﷻ) words that are decisive on the topic, **“Seeing that Allah [Himself] has disowned them [the *munāfiqs*] because of their guilt...”**

The picture here is so vivid that it is difficult to imagine why there should be “two Islamic minds” pertaining to the *munāfiqs*. Due to their conflicted nature, their foul intention, and their camouflaged pretension, these *munāfiqs* will go off on a deviant course — as assigned by Allah (ﷻ). He has cleared the air on these characters, He provided us with the most reliable information concerning their contrivance, and finally He said the last word on who they really are and how they should be viewed by Muslims located in the Qur’an and in the field of *imān*.

The following timely words preempt the proclivities of apologetic Muslims, **“Do you want to guide those whom Allah has caused to go astray?”** These curative words are intended for the “liberal,” the “tolerant,” and the “cultured” Muslims who are apt to be swayed by what the *munāfiqs* say in utter disregard for what they do. The *āyah* is saying in effect that if there are *munāfiqs* who are set on a course of deviation from Allah (ﷻ) and departure from His Prophet (ﷺ), then there is nothing apologetic Muslims can do to set them straight. Nothing. What these *munāfiqs* do to themselves and to others will take them further and further into error, deviation, and turpitude. This, in light of Allah’s (ﷻ) social laws, closes all avenues to guidance. Once this point is reached, there is no longer anything anyone can do to “save” these *munāfiqs*. It should be reiterated that the *āyah* here is speaking about a bloc of people who are living in a context of a declared war on Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) and who have defined themselves by taking

the side of Allah's (ﷻ) enemies in practice, while mumbling the words of Islam or even exercising the rituals of Islam. Within this atmosphere of hostility toward Allah (ﷻ), His Prophet (ﷺ), and the committed Muslims, these well-defined *munāfiqs* will have no recourse or redemption.

The *āyah* goes a step further into the psychology and strategy of the *munāfiqs*. They not only mislead themselves and bring about disastrous consequences for their own, but they also want to mislead the committed Muslims, **“They [the *munāfiqs*] would love to see you become *kāfirs* [God-deniers] as they have become *kāfirs*, so that you [the committed Muslims] are on par with them.”**

Let us pause for a moment and think about this *āyah*. In the first instance the underlying inclination of these *munāfiqs* is to encourage the Muslims to become *kāfirs* — not *munāfiqs*. This would suggest that these *munāfiqs* at their core are aware that there is an Islamic camp and a *kāfir* camp. Their defective internal psychology tells them that they want the Islamic camp or the committed Muslims to become *kāfirs*, secularists, materialists or however the fad of the time describes a *kāfir*. Notice that the *munāfiqs*' internal thoughts do not move them to persuade the *kāfirs* to become Muslims. Another interesting thought evoked by this *āyah* is that all *munāfiqs* are *kāfirs*, **“They [the *munāfiqs*] would like to see you become *kāfirs* as they have become *kāfirs*...”** insofar as their words, statements, and pronunciations, they may project the image of “Muslims”; they may outwardly say the *shahādah*, but Allah (ﷻ) in these Qur'anic words is not measuring them by their utterances. Rather, He is judging them by the hostile actions they display toward the Islamic state of self-determination represented by Muhammad (ﷺ) and the sacrificing Muslims around him. Lastly, the *āyah* makes clear that *nifāq* never takes a break while there are committed Muslims roaming the land. It never rests; it is relentless, tenacious, and indefatigable. The nature of the *munāfiqs*' clandestine *kufir* is to ensure that *īmān* neither has its human manifestation, nor that it should exist in practice and in performance.

Human nature is still human nature: today's world is little different than the one the Prophet (ﷺ) was in 14 centuries ago; the

forces of *kufir* are as opposed to Islam as ever, and the struggling Muslims are still here with all their potential and with all the weaknesses that come to light in these sacred pages. Pertinent examples from our time and day will help to anchor the Qur'anic criterion in our day-to-day experience. In the United States, so-called "counterterrorism" agencies have been shopping for verbal and nominal Muslims at job fairs, dangling generous scholarships, and luring away staff from each other in a race to overcome a "shortage" of analysts, a condition that may only get worse in the new intelligence reorganization.<sup>443</sup> The problem existed even before the American Congress and the White House approved an intelligence restructuring in late 2004 that created myriad intelligence positions for people, especially token Muslims whose skills were already in high demand. Politically parochial Muslims who are in it for the money are the obvious conscripts of choice: to get them to "buy in" to the counterterrorism, safer-world phenomenon, these agencies have tried to assuage the natural guilt of Muslims collecting intelligence on other Muslims by refrains such as, "...the intelligence you gather will not be used to determine the strike zone of an armed drone."

There is no consensus among America's 16 intelligence agencies on where staffing needs are the most acute. But few dispute that many more analysts are needed, particularly in the departments and agencies created since 9/11. The fastest growing US agency, the Department of Homeland Security is a prime example. "If you had a hundred, we'd take them," retired Army Lt. General Patrick M. Hughes, the agency's top intelligence official, said in an interview in 2004. "We have to look, search, test, assess... We need people, but we need good people."<sup>444</sup> To find them, Homeland Security and other agencies are heading to job fairs; they are also trying to snag people from the private sector.

The US Congress is also offering "sweeteners." Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Chairman Pat Roberts (Republican from Kansas) created the intelligence community's answer to the GI Bill and other military scholarships.<sup>445</sup> As part of the program, undergraduate and graduate students can receive as much as \$50,000 for two years of tuition if they agree to take needed jobs in

an intelligence agency for as long as three years. In 2004, slots for 150 students were divided among the agencies, using \$4 million from Congress; about \$6 million will be available in 2005.<sup>446</sup>

Being an analyst is almost an academic profession — teaching, keeping up with the latest in the field, and intuition — that requires synthesizing and then distilling voluminous amounts of information into reports for policymakers in the executive branch and in Congress. Among the most classified and most important reports are national intelligence estimates, which draw on information from across government agencies and are written by top analysts at the National Intelligence Council.<sup>447</sup> It was the Council that produced the October 2002 estimate on the threat posed by Iraq, with its overblown assessment of weapons stockpiles.<sup>448</sup>

Precise statistics on the number of required analysts are hard to come by; almost universally, agencies say such numbers are classified. US President George W. Bush ordered the CIA in November, 2004 to double the number of analysts it employs.<sup>449</sup> The agency would not say how many new jobs that directive created. Beginning several years ago, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, which studies imagery from spy satellites and other systems, initiated the employment of approximately 900 analysts, most of whom will join the agency between 2005 and 2009.<sup>450</sup> In addition, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) plans to hire 1,000 mid-level to senior civilians in 2005, mostly analysts, in jobs with starting salaries in the range of \$53,000–\$74,000.<sup>451</sup> The DIA said there has been more competition since the 9/11 attacks to hire analysts that would ultimately work for the CIA, the FBI and elsewhere, especially people who can speak languages such as Arabic. According to DIA spokespersons, security clearances for intelligence personnel narrow the field even more, “You don’t have a limitless pool to draw from.”<sup>452</sup> The National Security Agency (NSA), the USA’s code breaker and code protector, hopes to hire more than 6,000 people by 2009, on top of the 1,300 hired by the end of September, 2004. The secretive agency would not say how many will be analysts.<sup>453</sup>

Agencies also hire away analysts from each other. “Sure, there is intense competition within the government,” said a Homeland

Security spokeswoman. “The pool that we are looking for is probably going to be fairly limited and in high demand.”<sup>454</sup> During a series of hearings into the bombings of the USS Cole, the US embassies in Africa, and other attacks, it was said that the shortage of experienced analysts was the intelligence community’s most glaring deficiency.<sup>455</sup> Most specialties require analysts to invest 7–10 years before they are considered to have gotten a true handle on their subject. Cultures and languages can require extensive immersion in a particular region, which cannot be gained from sitting behind a desk in Washington. Michael Scheuer, who headed the CIA’s Osama bin Laden unit from 1996 to 1999, said the intelligence services need to find more experts on Islamic extremism, like the legions of analysts available during the Cold War to deal with the Soviets.<sup>456</sup>

There are traditional and conscience-challenged Muslims who are willing to move into the positions above: analysts, informers, spies, and intelligence agents. When they offer themselves up for this kind of employment, these trifling Muslims assume responsibilities that support the system of *kufir* against the system of Islam; or to put it in the idiom of Islam, they become *munāfiqs* who root for the enemy of Allah (ﷻ) even though they pray, fast, and do all the other required individualistic rituals of Islam. The pertinent *āyāt* here are telling sincere Muslims not to consider these types of conventional and cultural Muslims to be with Allah (ﷻ), His Prophet (ﷺ), and the committed Muslims who are fighting and dying to uphold the Book of Allah (ﷻ).

The *kāfir* complex of nation-states scours information on dedicated and confidence-building Muslims, foreign and domestic, and in the process, it has realized that it needs “Muslims” who are familiar with Islam and knowledgeable of the Muslim domain. Once these “Muslims” are recruited for this task of *kufir*, they — regardless of their religious piety and outward expressions of faith — become *munāfiqs*. From there they go on to espouse *kufir* to the extent that they wish one day those “Islamic fundamentalists” and “Islamic extremists” become like them: *kāfirs* and people who believe that God’s will has nothing to do with man’s will on earth. If there was

any such thing as a certified Muslim heretic, then these are the ones. Muslim informants and undercover operatives in Lebanon and Pakistan have been caught working for Mossad, the Israeli secret service.<sup>457</sup> Hundreds of Muslims are working for US intelligence agencies in various capacities as analysts, translators, agent provocateurs, and eyes on the ground. In his book, *The Terror Factory: Inside the FBI's Manufactured War on Terrorism*, Trevor Aaronson talks about Muslim informants employed by the FBI,

What became clear from my reporting is that in the decade since 9/11, the FBI has built the largest network of spies ever to exist in the United States — with ten times as many informants on the streets today as there were during the infamous COINTELPRO operations under FBI director J. Edgar Hoover — with the majority of these spies focused on ferreting out terrorism in Muslim communities... Every year, the US government allocates \$3 billion to the FBI to prevent the next 9/11, more money than the Bureau receives to combat organized crime.

In addition to the roster of 15,000 informants that the Bureau maintains — many of them tasked with infiltrating Muslim communities in the United States — for every informant officially listed, there are as many as three unofficial ones, known in FBI parlance as “hip pockets.” Informants can be doctors, clerks, imams. Some might not even consider themselves informants. But the FBI regularly taps all of them as part of a domestic intelligence apparatus whose only historical peer might be COINTELPRO, the program the Bureau ran from the 1950s to the 70s to discredit and marginalize groups ranging from the Ku Klux Klan to the Communist party to the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.’s civil rights organization.<sup>458</sup>

Just as the CIA and other intelligence agencies hire these “Muslims,” so Allah (ﷻ) tells anyone willing to listen that it is the

occupations of these Muslims that define who they are and not their religious liturgy. It is not hard to visualize *kāfir* intelligence agencies and their officials attending Islamic universities, seminaries, and even private Islamic study circles as they try to recruit “select” Muslims for the purposes of sabotaging the Islamic awakening of our times. Scholarships and bonuses may be offered to such “Muslim” students who will work for the array of departments at virtual war with the Muslims of the world in their innocent and God-given right for self-determination on the basis of this Qur’an and the Prophet’s (ﷺ) Sunnah.

**Do not, therefore, take them for your allies until they desert the domain of evil and strive on a course to Allah; and if they revert to [open] enmity, seize them and slay them wherever you may find them. And do not take any of them [the *munāfiqs*] for your ally or booster (4:89).**

Family and blood relations have their effect on human societies. Disavowing one of its own if he joins the forces of *kufr* in their war against Islamic self-determination can be extremely difficult for a family or tribe. In some instances there may be material economic or financial interests that bind members of an Islamic society with individuals who have joined or been recruited by *kāfir* establishments. These sentimental or materialistic considerations should not interfere with a matter of principle: a Muslim loses his character and privileges as a Muslim if and when he joins the service of governmental *kufr*.

The Islamic Ummah cannot be disenfranchised by the delicate feelings of blood relationships or the entrepreneurial interests of market mechanisms. An Islamic Ummah is not a collection of tribes and clans, an amalgam of genes and races, or a geographical mistake bound together by market forces. Rather it is essentially an ideological *ummaḥ* that institutionalizes the values, morals, and laws formalized in the Qur’an and the Sunnah. This means that there shall be no allegiance between the Islamic bloc of peoples and



the *kāfir* junta of elites and interests. Muslims who are located in the system of *kufr* can only redeem themselves by moving out of that system, by offering no assistance to its captains, and by enlisting in the Islamic society or the Islamic Ummah as active participants in its movement. This constitutes a *hijrah* from the *kāfir* regime to the Islamic order.

On this level of commitment, these Muslims under *kāfir* control will have to leave their homes, their neighborhoods, their immediate communities, their extended families, and their homelands so as to relocate within a compatible Islamic society that comes with a unique set of social structures. If they cannot do that when the stakes are high and when the Islamic state is under threat, then they are only verbal Muslims who are indicted by their own actions, **“And do not take any of them for your ally or helper.”**

It goes without saying that this Islamic program on earth does not force anyone to become a Muslim. The non-Muslims living within an Islamic society and state are free to go public with their own religious ceremonies and rites, even though, at times, these may be at odds with the values and standards of Islam. So long as there is no expression of hostility toward the Muslims and no impugning of Islam itself, the committed Muslims are required to facilitate such freedom. The Islamic accommodation of people of scripture does not suggest that they are free to malign Islam, distort the meanings of the Qur'an, defame the character of Muhammad (ﷺ), or in any other way become offensive toward the society, people, and country that afford them protection and security. Non-Muslims in an Islamic society and state are protected in their lives, livelihood, and properties as a matter of Qur'anic principle. There is no discrimination in this Islamic social ambience: Muslims and non-Muslims are equal when it comes to justice. These non-Muslims may even be allowed to adjudicate certain legal inquests with their own laws, having an autonomy of sorts — as long as all or any of that does not undermine the foundations and the strategy of Islam.

Islamic standards and values are seasoned so as to integrate non-Muslims into the cultural fabric of Islam. However, this decla-

ration does not mean that these same standards and values are cast in a way that tolerates “make-believe” Muslims and Muslims who pretend with the intent to deceive — in other words, *munāfiqs*. An Islamic authority cannot integrate traitors, dual-loyalists, and saboteurs into its ranks.

Islam, the Qur’an, and Muhammad (ﷺ) are as consistent with the Muslims themselves as they are with other peoples of scripture. Deviations on matters of theology are to be countenanced in an Islamic society. Muslims who have theological arguments with each other are expected to endure counter views without resorting to violence or aspersion; similarly, Muslims who have a theological argument with the Jews and Christians are expected to show understanding and inclusion toward them. However, when it comes to Muslims, Christians, or Jews who have sided with the political structures of *kufṛ* and joined the military armies of the *ṭāghūt*, thereby becoming practical enemies of Islamic self-determination, then at this point, there is no tolerance, no accommodation, and no integration. Any allowance or consolidation of enemy elements into an Islamic society becomes a bias against the integrity of Islam itself and an appeasement of its enemies.

### **In Islam, Peace Is the Norm and War Is the Exception**

The precision in this Qur’an does not permit random generalizations, especially the kinds that people are apt to make so as to satisfy the achievement of certain agendas. Hence, these *āyāt* go on to point out exceptions to the rule. There are certain individuals who should not be taken as prisoners of war or become battlefield targets. They may or may not be *munāfiqs* in their own right; but even if they are, the conditions and social reality fashioned by the Qur’an would exempt these *munāfiqs* from the rule that applies to their equivalents who are working in tandem with a government or force in a state of war with the Islamic authority. Alternatively, there may be some Muslims who seek domicile in a territory or a state that is at peace with the Islamic state. In this instance these Muslims are classified not by their individual “faith” but by the

nature of the society or state they are constituents of: non-belligerent, passive, or peaceful. Allah's (ﷻ) words are unambiguous,

**Unless it be such [of the *munāfiqs*] as have ties with people to whom you [the committed Muslims] yourselves are bound by a treaty, or such as come to you because their hearts recoil from [the thought of] making war, either on you or on their own folk... (4:90).**

In this instance, how Allah's (ﷻ) *dīn* opts for a nonviolent approach when the opportunity presents itself ought to be thoroughly contemplated. Such a *modus operandi* is consistent with the seriousness and integrity of Islam. Allah (ﷻ) did not impose political boundaries on human beings, and by virtue of this reality, people are given and should have the freedom to choose where they want to live and to be who they really are in their hearts and in their souls. All peoples should enjoy this freedom of conscience, freedom of thought, and freedom of association — and Muslims are not an exception in this regard, despite the realities on the ground in the world today. No expression of freedom can become a declaration of war against the same freedom that belongs to committed Muslims. There are times in the course of history and human development when non-Islamic societies are on good terms with the Islamic Ummah; these non-Islamic societies do not harbor intentions of aggression or war against the Muslims. And so Allah (ﷻ) counsels the committed Muslims to treat these types of non-Islamic societies with respect and coexistence on a mutual basis. And if within these societies, there are Muslims who are its civil members, then they too should be secure in their lives and possessions.

In this exceptional state, Muslims who reside in an un-Islamic society gain the classification of the particular society they are in. If that un-Islamic society has worked out arrangements of peaceful coexistence with the Islamic Ummah, then the benefits trickle down and the Muslims, among others, feel the security and self-assurance that accrues from peaceful relations. These “foreign Muslims” are treated in the same manner and with the same standards

their non-Muslim countrymen are treated, no preference being exhibited for one over the other.

The same arrangement applies to tribes, regions, and nations that are passive or neutral vis-à-vis the Islamic Ummah, as well as to sub-national groups who break with their larger “ethnic,” “racial,” or “nationalist” group and resist any confrontation with the Muslim Ummah. They do not feel it is right to fight or go to war with their own compatriots against the Muslim Ummah, opting instead for detachment and inaction, **“or such as come to you because their hearts cringe from [the thought of] making war, either on you [the committed Muslims] or on their own folk...”**

When Qur’anic Muslims rise to the level of these meanings, they understand that nonviolence is reciprocated with nonviolence. People who conscientiously flinch at carrying arms and going to war will only see a friendly and accommodating attitude from the Muslims. In the nature of man and in the details of warfare, there will be people unwilling to fight those (Muslims) who are only trying to communicate Allah’s (ﷻ) words. Such types have to be acknowledged and treated with respect. They were present in Arabia when this Qur’an was making headway; they were even to be found within the bastion of Quraysh itself. When the contradictions between *imān* and *kufr* reached the military level, no Muslim or Islamic authority forced these types of people to take sides in a “you are either with us or you are against us” genre of ultimatum. To the contrary, the Islamic authority was pleased with their nonpartisan or disinterested attitude. The Muslims were confident enough to know that once the infrastructure of *kufr* was dislodged from the Arabian peninsula, it would only be a matter of time before individuals and persons, tribes and clans, cities and regions would see the light and make the historic move toward Allah (ﷻ). In the years to come, this is exactly what happened.

Another way of looking at this subject is to say that these neutral non-combatants could have been actively involved on the side of the *mushriks* and *kāfirs* against the Islamic forces. And in that case, the Muslims would have had to deal with a larger force of hostility than would have been the case had these neutral people decid-

ed to withdraw from the raging war between the Muslims and the *kāfirs*. In a sense, this is a godsend to the Muslims who are the beneficiaries of Allah (ﷻ) pacifying these potential enemies,

**Although, if Allah had willed to make them stronger than you, they would certainly have made war on you. Thus, if they let you be, and do not make war on you, and offer you peace, Allah does not allow you to harm them (4:90).**

This *āyah* helps to curtail the zealotry and “military adrenalin” that would like to classify everyone in a war zone with a simplistic binary rush to judgment: “either with us or against us.” Even with this Book’s fine touch and delicate insight, available to anyone and everyone, there is still a tonnage of literature accusing Muslims of self-determination to be bloody, bloodthirsty, and guilty of bloodlust. These fighting words and incendiary rhetoric emanate from the card-carrying members of the “Judeo-Christian” axis. They say that the United States and its coalition of forces are now mired in a religious war. The (Muslim) enemies, “...as witnessed by their astonishing willingness to slaughter themselves, are not principally motivated by political or economic grievances.” They ramble on, saying, “...anyone who imagines territorial concerns as accounting for terrorism by Muslims must explain why there are no Palestinian Christian suicide bombers. They, too, suffer the ordeal of the Israeli occupation. For that matter, where are the Tibetan Buddhist suicide bombers? The Tibetans have suffered an occupation far more brutal than any we or the Israelis have imposed on the Muslim world [nonsensically suggesting that Chinese occupation is more inhumane than Euro-American occupation]. The truth that we [Judeo-Christians] must finally confront is that Islam contains specific doctrines about martyrdom and jihad that directly inspire Muslim terrorism!”<sup>459</sup>

This is where the Judeo-Christian nervous system goes into overdrive, “Unless the world’s Muslims can find some way of expunging the metaphysics that is fast turning their religion into a

cult of death, we will ultimately face the same perversely destructive behavior throughout much of the world. Wherever these events occur, we will find Muslims tending to side with other Muslims, no matter how sociopathic their behavior. It is time we admitted that we are not at war with ‘terrorism.’ We are at war with Islam.”<sup>460</sup>

The looney-tune standard continues, “This is not to say that we are at war with all Muslims, but we are absolutely at war with the vision of life that is prescribed to all Muslims in the Koran [their defective spelling, not ours]. The only reason Muslim fundamentalism is a threat to us is because the fundamentals of Islam are a threat to us. Every American should read the Koran and discover the relentlessness with which non-Muslims are vilified in its pages. The idea that Islam is a ‘peaceful religion hijacked by extremists’ is a dangerous fantasy — and it is now a particularly dangerous fantasy for Muslims to indulge.”<sup>461</sup>

Compare the delicate meanings being pondered here in the Qur’an with Judeo-Christian Armageddon fulminations, “It should be of particular concern to us [Americans and Jews] that the beliefs of devout Muslims pose a special problem for nuclear deterrence. There is, after all, little possibility of our having a cold war with an Islamist regime armed with long-range nuclear weapons. A cold war requires that the parties be mutually deterred by the threat of death. Notions of martyrdom and jihad run roughshod over the logic that allowed the United States and the Soviet Union to pass half a century perched, more or less stable, on the brink of Armageddon. We must come to terms with the possibility that men who are every bit as zealous to die as the 9/11 hijackers may one day get their hands on long-range nuclear weaponry.”<sup>462</sup>

These bang-up accusations have no end, “It is not at all clear how we should proceed in our dialogue with the Muslim world. But deluding ourselves with euphemisms is not the answer. Our press should report on the terrifying state of discourse in the Arab press, exposing the degree to which it is a tissue of lies, conspiracy theories, and exhortations to recapture the glories of the 7th century. All civilized nations must unite in condemnation of a theology that now threatens to destabilize much of the earth. Muslim moderates,

wherever they are, must be given every tool necessary to win a war of ideas with their coreligionists. Otherwise, we will have to win some very terrible wars in the future.”<sup>463</sup>

Columnists and pundits who are reading the imperialist-Zionist script on Islam should turn to this Qur'an before they begin to paint such a grim picture and pass such judgments. The essential, unmistakable, and demonstrable fact is that there is an alliance of regimes and juntas that are at war with Islamic self-determination. The Muslims cannot be allowed to run their societies with their own programs, and for their own benefit. As war has its definition, scale, features, reasons, and consequences, so Allah (ﷻ) has privileged anyone willing to listen with vital and redeeming information on this whole issue from beginning to end. But what is to be done with an intransigent imperialist and Zionist press that hijacks the Judeo-Christian heritage, deploys all the misunderstandings of history, works up the mistakes of some Muslims, and then refuses to look at the meanings of this holy Text, before it plunges the planet into a level of pandemonium predicated on the clash of civilizations?

This lesson is a demonstration of how Muslims are constrained by this Scripture to do the Will of Allah (ﷻ) on earth. The devout Muslims are taught to opt for peaceful solutions when there is reciprocity. They are told to cease fire when there are people who prefer peace to war, and to reach a point of common understanding. But they are not told to do any of that while simultaneously losing their direction, diluting their Islamic character, compromising their rights, and confusing the issue. It is the latter that is consistent with a warrior mentality: a warrior is a warrior and no amount of religious or ritualistic layers are going to obscure his identity, regardless of whether they are Jewish, Christian, or Islamic.

The Muslims are taught in this everlasting Scripture to be sensitive and enthusiastic toward those who seek them no harm. Consistent with the attitude of fostering a just peace, they are taught in this same Scripture that they are not to accede to a clichéd peace — one excluding them from being the subjects of Allah (ﷻ). Peace at any price is not the final word in doing Allah's (ﷻ) will on earth.

However, a peace that guarantees freedom of conscience, freedom of expression, and freedom of thought along with the rights and responsibilities accompanying this expansiveness of freedom is a peace that is sanctioned by this Book. We Muslims have a right to be our collective selves. In as much as this Qur'an is the determining paradigm of our collective self, no power on earth can be allowed to interfere between us and the Qur'an. And if there is a government or a military that has placed itself in such a position, then it becomes a legitimate target of warfare by committed Muslims.

The problem that the world has had with Islam in the form of its governments, establishments, and systems — a problem few are willing to acknowledge — is that the Muslims have all the right in the world to consolidate themselves without outside interference and hindrance. They also have a right to go public with the Qur'an, Islam, and the Prophet (ﷺ). It is their duty to publicly and peacefully proclaim scripture. They cannot honor this right if there are artificially composed barriers between scripture and society, and hence, these barriers have to be taken down — by force, if necessary. All peoples of the world have the right to be given a chance to listen to what Allah (ﷻ) has to say. After that, they are free to affirm or to deny scripture. Every philosopher has the right to profess his ideas; but when it comes to Muslims, why should it be any different? Currently, they have no right at all to present the Qur'an, Allah's (ﷻ) scripture, to the peoples of the world, especially in a way that takes their presentation to the level of societal institutions, social policy, and political discipline. Herein lies the problem.

The social consciousness of Muslims is raised yet another notch with insight into another “class” of people. Unlike the previous one, this grouping in society does not deserve sensitivity or sympathy. This social strain of people is as vile as the first category of *munāfiqs* above; it is neither a constituent of a peaceful society nor does it belong to a state that has a treaty with the Islamic Ummah. Allah's (ﷻ) words size up this motley crew,

**You will find [that there are] others who would like to be safe from you as well as safe from their own folk,**



**[but who], whenever they are faced anew with an urge to sedition, plunge into it headlong. Hence, if they do not let you be, and do not offer you peace, and do not stay their hands, seize them and eliminate them whenever you come upon them: for it is against these that We have clearly empowered you [to make war] (4:92).**

This *āyah* is reported to have been revealed to expose a segment of the Makkkan society. A collection of people who would go from Makkah to Madinah, meet the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ), and appear to be friendly with him, greeting him and exchanging courtesies. But on further observation and knowledge, it turned out that they were doing all this to put on a show for public consumption. When these same Makkans would return to Quraysh they would immerse themselves into the traditions of *kuf*r and the norms of *shirk*. Their purpose was to secure a “good standing” for themselves in both Makkah and in Madinah. They wanted to feel safe in both places. Allah (ﷻ) divulged orders that these types be put on military notice and become military targets if they do not abandon such behavior and subsequently prove they have amended their ways,

**Therefore, if they do not leave you alone and do not offer you [terms of] peace [a treaty or reconciliation], and do not stay their hands [that is, put down their arms], then take them [captives] and eliminate them wherever you find them: for it is against these that We have rendered you with the authority [to go to war] (4:92).**

This Qur’an teaches the Muslims to be warmhearted with those who are prone to peace and amicable relations; at the same time, it teaches the Muslims to be serious and decisive when it comes to those who are ready to fight and kill at the thought of Muslims bearing the Scripture of Allah (ﷻ). Though this may be painful at the outset, the Muslims are going to have to learn, with this Qur’an embedded in their hearts and in their history, who is

who in this world. The social consciousness that comes from understanding and executing the meanings of this Scripture will suffice them — if they can only open their eyes and distinguish their enemies from their friends.

The Qur’anic declaration identifies two sets of people who are outside the jurisdiction of Islam. Within these two sets of people there are fine lines. If the Muslims take these *āyāt* and place them in the immediate world, they will realize — through their leadership accomplishments and war aura — they have to be fair and objective when they encounter potential enemies as opposed to potential friends. There is a tendency when Muslims are in a “sacrifice and struggle” mode to tip the balance toward “hotheads” and “hardliners,” but the lesson here tells them to be accurate and balanced. The demands of accuracy and balance, however, cannot be permitted to drift over to an extreme that wants to write jihad, *qitāl*, sacrifices, and struggle out of the Qur’an and the Islamic dictionary altogether. Obvious and reasonable arguments can be made for a scaling down of the Islamic fighting spirit, but these ought to be commensurate with other reasonable arguments that motivate Muslims to go to war and fight for their rights. The “validity” of such arguments is not as much a matter of canceling jihad or generalizing peace as it is one of understanding how the Qur’an instructs the Muslims to respond to the particular conditions and changing circumstances that at one time may require the highest fighting morale possible, and that at another time may merit the peaceful reciprocity belonging to those who are genuinely peaceful. Anyone who tries to distill these details down to facile generalizations will not be on target. The lesson here demonstrates why the Muslims need to be socially conscious enough to recognize who is who along the path of rebuilding Islam and re-institutionalizing this *dīn*.

### No Rationale for a Muslim to Kill a Brother Muslim

Combat duty is an inescapable necessity of life. In as far as Islam is concerned, combat duty is assigned against external enemies, enemies of the Islamic state, and what constitutes clear and present danger. When it comes to intra-Islamic and inter-Islamic relations combat duty, warfare, and, if the situation calls for it, killing, are all within the scope of Islamic commitment and of Qur'anic moral rectification. If a life is terminated it is done for the purpose of *ḥadd* or *qiṣāṣ* (the legal basis for capital punishment). From an Islamic reference point, within the theater of war, if any killing is to take place, it is for the purpose of restoring justice, *fi sabilillāh*. This obviously excludes the indiscriminate slaughter of innocents, non-combatants, and civilians so frequently associated with the “collateral damage” endemic to wars of occupation, scorched-earth policies, drone warfare, wars on terror, and modern counterinsurgency operations.

But within the bounds of an Islamic society and the extended relationships of the Islamic state, the fervent and intimate brotherhood relationship between and among Muslims excludes any bloodshed. A Muslim may never kill another Muslim — except by mistake or unintentionally. Culpable homicide — the killing of a Muslim, as through negligence (manslaughter) — which is still considered unlawful though not necessarily up to the level of murder, is associated with a specific set of legal procedures and punishment as per Allah's (ﷻ) instructions in the Qur'an. But the premeditated murder of a Muslim, an act that was planned with malice of forethought and motivated intent, the deliberate expunging of an innocent Muslim's life — this type of killing has no *kaf-fārah* (atonement),

**And it is not conceivable that a committed Muslim should kill another committed Muslim, unless it be by mistake. And upon him who has killed a committed Muslim by mistake there is the duty of freeing a committed Muslim from bondage and paying an indemnity to the victim's relatives, unless they forgo it by way of**

charity. Now if the slain, while himself a committed Muslim, belonged to a people who are at war with you, [the penance shall be confined to] the freeing of a committed Muslim from bondage; whereas, if he belonged to a people to whom you are bound by a treaty, [it shall consist of] an indemnity to be paid to his relatives in addition to the freeing of a committed Muslim from bondage. And he who does not have the wherewithal shall fast [instead] for two consecutive months. [This is] the atonement ordained by Allah: and Allah is indeed all-knowing, wise. But whoever deliberately kills another committed Muslim, his requital shall be Hell, therein to abide; and Allah will condemn him, and will reject him, and will prepare for him spectacular suffering (4:92–93).

The terrain of these *āyāt* covers three cases in which a Muslim is killed by mistake, or without an intention to kill; and a fourth case, which has to do with the premeditated murder of a committed Muslim. These events do not necessarily have to happen within an Islamic society as the *āyāt* indicate. The killing of a committed Muslim by another committed Muslim in an act of premeditated murder is very unlikely to happen. A Muslim's life is sacrosanct. Nothing in life should dilute a Muslim's relationship with his brother Muslim to such a degree that murder becomes an option. The fraternal ties, the shared belief, the common objectives, the close social lifestyle, the common enemy, the family and neighborhood dynamics, the premium that is placed on Islamic life, and many other interlocking factors makes it impossible for a Muslim in his right mind to kill another inoffensive Muslim.

In the first instance, the *āyah* is clear and unequivocal: there is no possible way a committed Muslim can kill another committed Muslim, except by fault and dereliction, **“And it is not conceivable that a committed Muslim should slay another committed Muslim, unless it be by mistake...”** The Islamic sense does not accept or tolerate any other rationale for such a heinous act to take place. A Mus-

lim perceives of himself as an extension and a mirror of his brother Muslim. Ending a Muslim's life is like ending one's own life. It should not be and it should not happen. Besides this Islamic social and psychological union, there is a Muslim's relationship with Allah's Prophet (ﷺ); both the slaying and slain Muslims are his students and supporters, and both are also conjoined in their relationship with Allah (ﷻ) who is always present, always available, and always with them. This mutual Islamic consciousness makes it unimaginable and unthinkable for a devout Muslim to end the life of another devout Muslim. Impossible. But if a culpable homicide does occur, it does so within the three conditions outlined in the *āyah*:

1. The slain is a committed Muslim who belongs to a family of committed Muslims who are themselves located within an Islamic country or jurisdiction – in this case, the *kaffārah* (reparation) due upon the slayer is to free a committed Muslim from bondage or incarceration, and to pay a *diyyah* (financial compensation) to the victim's next-of-kin, unless they forgo it by way of charity. Freeing a Muslim from bondage is a compensation for the Islamic society, which has just lost one of its members; hence, one Muslim who has been taken out of society by an act of homicide is replaced by another Muslim who has been put back into society by an act of atonement. Relieving a Muslim from bondage or slavery is tantamount to giving him a new life and also giving Islamic society more life. The *diyyah* serves to sooth the aggravation and anger of the victim's relatives. Nothing can of course substitute for the lost life and missing member of the family, but a gesture of good will goes a long way to consoling the anguished and the bereaved. With this procedure of "making up" for a lost one, the words of passion and the *āyāt* of compassion counsel the victim's family to be forgiving if they are able to do so. Forgiveness is a feature of social connectedness, human understanding, and integration within an Islamic social life.
2. A committed Muslim is killed while his family is part of a society and state at war with Islam – in this case a committed Muslim still has to be sprung from bondage or captivity in lieu

of the Muslim who was fallen; but there is no *diyyah* requirement toward the victim's relatives, who are in a state of war with the Muslims. If money is paid in this regard it would go to "financing" the war against the Muslims, in a sense. Besides, it does not make sense to sooth and console the emotions of the deceased Muslim's folks by paying a restitution (*diyyah*) to those who are at war with the Muslims.

3. The slain belongs to folks who are in a state of non-belligerence with Islam – some scholarly opinions treat this case in the same manner as the first: a committed Muslim is freed from bondage, and the deceased's family is paid financial compensation (*diyyah*). A scholarly difference has emerged here because the wording of the *āyah* does not specify whether the slain is a committed Muslim or whether he is a non-Muslim who belongs to a state that is on peaceful terms with the Islamic state.<sup>464</sup> One take on this by some scholars is that if a Muslim does indeed, by mistake, kill a non-Muslim belonging to a friendly society, then the punishment for him is to pay the bereaved folks restitution. In Islamic history there are cases when the Prophet (ﷺ) paid restitution to the *mu'āhidūn* (people tied to the Muslims by a treaty on amicable terms).<sup>465</sup> It has not been reported, though, that he freed committed Muslims in this particular case.

All together the first, second, and third cases above seem to be outlining the mistaken death of committed Muslims either in an Islamic society, in a *kāfir* society, or in a society that is on friendly terms with an Islamic society.

As far as premeditated murder of a committed Muslim by another committed Muslim, this is unconscionable. A devout and dedicated Muslim in a vibrant relationship with Allah (ﷻ) could never do such a thing. There is no *diyyah* and no unchaining of a captive Muslim that could stand in for the death of an innocent and guiltless committed Muslim by the hand of another Muslim. The penalty for this crime is referred to the torment prepared by Allah (ﷻ),

**But whoever deliberately slays another committed Muslim, his requital shall be Hell, therein to abide; and Allah will condemn him, and will reject him, and will prepare for him formidable suffering (4:93).**

Allah (ﷻ) is the only One who gives life and pronounces death; the act of intentional killing is not within the purview of human behaviors. Murder not only terminates an individual life, but it also terminates a relationship that binds one Muslim to another. This is almost a way of extinguishing *īmān* itself. This abhorrent misconduct and abominable sin is so serious that some scholars, such as ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās, said there is no atonement for it. Other scholars, though, are of the view that eventually in the long course of time, this deed, as atrocious as it is, may be forgiven by Allah (ﷻ). They base their opinion on the *āyah*, **“Allah does not forgive the act of equating others to Him; but He forgives anything less than that [coming] from anyone...” (4:48, 116).** Accordingly, a murderer stands a chance to be forgiven, and to eventually be relieved of the punishment in the life to come.<sup>466</sup>

In real life, at the commencement of the Islamic struggle, there were instances in which the early Muslims were actually living with individuals who killed members of these Muslims’ families: fathers, brothers, and sons. Some of them had not become Muslims yet, but once these erstwhile murderers became Muslims there was nothing else to be done in the form of retribution. Human nature had to adjust to the new reality, despite the fact that one can never feel totally normal seeing the killer of his father walking the streets, for example. Nonetheless, after these previous killers became Muslims, the other Muslims never thought of killing them. The Islamic civil status guaranteed these new Muslims their full rights. And with all the *jāhili* undercurrents of the bloodshed among members of this society, not one instance of a blood feud was ever recorded after the society accepted the Islamic way of life as promulgated and exemplified by the Prophet (ﷺ). All was cured by the fact that everyone now belonged to this Islamic fraternity and the brotherhood of a higher responsibility.

With these categorical and plain-spoken *āyāt*, how is it possible for Muslim-on-Muslim violence (sectarian and ethnic) to consume the Muslim-majority world for the interests of its imperialist and Zionist enemies? How can Muslims shamelessly kill other (innocent) Muslims, in the tens of thousands, without the slightest remorse? In early-2013, the Indonesian government officially declared all Shī'īs to be *kāfirs*, thereby providing a rationalization for their extermination, as if this step is greater in importance than addressing the needs of the sick and the hungry in the country, of which there are tens of millions. Again in early-2013, Pakistani Sunnīs, apparently connected to Lashkar-e Jhangvi/Sipah-e Saha-ba, murdered 115 Hazara Shī'īs in a suburb of Quetta, Balochistan, which will instigate the bereaved to acts of vengeance; and this is just one of a long and unending series of homicidal convulsions throughout the country over the past three decades. The Saudi and other Gulf Arabian governments have emptied their prisons of murderers and rapists to go and fight a “war of liberation” against what they call Shī'ī *rawāfiḍ* in Syria. Sectarian warfare in Iraq may have already frittered away between 100,000–200,000 lives over the past 10 years since the American invasion and occupation in 2003. A Kuwaiti Shī'ī being sheltered by the British government accused Abū Bakr, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, and Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishaḥ of assassinating the Prophet (ﷺ) and his daughter Fāṭimaḥ, again as if such a declaration somehow trumps the continuing dismemberment and subjugation of the Muslim East, Sunnī and Shī'ī alike.<sup>467</sup> There is ongoing territorial warfare leading to bloodshed and carnage between Kurds and Turks on the one hand, and between Kurds and Arabians on the other; and now, a new ethnic war is erupting in North Africa between the nomadic Tuaregs and the African Fulanis — despite the fact that all of these ethnicities and races claim to be Muslims, who are daily reading the Qur'an.<sup>468</sup> And this is just a short list that does not even begin to scratch the surface of the many fault lines in the Muslim world, all of which are being exploited to spectacular effect by its enemies.

So, what gives? Why are Muslims so easily motivated to kill their own without just cause despite myriad remonstrations from



their own notable scholars and an impending torment in the next life, per these *āyāt*? The easy answer is ignorance on behalf of those Muslims who are excited into a rage of killing. But the simpleminded call to educate the Muslims, in a way that is disconnected from shaping public institutions according to Allah's (ﷻ) standards, opens the door for combative Muslim enemies to intrude into an intra-Islamic affair with their own logic. They say that if it is so easy for Muslims to kill other Muslims, then why would these Muslims feel any recrimination in killing non-Muslims? Hence this Islam, which has no value for human life altogether, not even for its own adherents, needs a reformation.

Accumulating knowledge without having a direction, a purpose, or a filtering mechanism is, in and of itself, not a cure for ignorance. And thus the answer to the above question is not just plain ignorance that bears no contextual relationship with socializing institutions; rather it is an ignorance that is fostered, maintained, perpetuated, and exploited by criminal governments through a liberally funded establishment of court scholars and an elaborate network of pundits, intellectuals, and academics who populate the media, think tanks, and institutions of higher learning. Some of these governments — chiefly of Saudi Arabia, and also the United Arab Emirates and Qatar — have not only gone public with their sectarian provocations but have been training and funding *salafi* shock troops for sectarian wars of attrition in Syria, Iraq, Bahrain, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Algeria, and Mauritania. Others — of the US, the European Union, Israel, and Turkey — have demonstrated a high degree of comfort with the public face of Muslim sectarianism represented by Arabia et al., while themselves hiding in the shadows behind a rhetoric of popular representation and human rights that fronts for a geostrategic pathology at the root of which is the suspension of Islam, the Qur'an, and Muhammad (ﷺ) from the public space as the arbiters of social justice.

The Saudi government in particular is tailor-made for the generational interests of its imperial American, Zionist Israeli, and crusading European partners. Saudi official and religious pro-

nouncements are more attuned to securing the welfare of Jews and Christians (they consider the Israelis and Americans to be representatives of Judaism and Christianity) than they are to the livelihood and prosperity of other Muslims. Just compare the way they treat their Sri Lankan and Bangladeshi Muslim day-laborers to the red carpet they roll out for alcoholics and skirt-chasers from Europe and America; compare their paltry investment in Muslim countries to the billions and trillions on deposit in Western financial institutions that fuel imperial and Zionist aggressions in the Muslim East; and compare the hundreds of tons of ordnance dropped on Muslims struggling for liberation to not one missile, bomb, or bullet officially launched against America/Israel for its depredations against the Palestinians, Syrians, Iraqis, Afghans, and other Muslims.

All this is because the Saudi religio-political establishment does not consider these others to be Muslims at all. They shroud their exclusivism (racism) with a disdain seemingly made acceptable because of the use of religious language. They say that these other Muslims, particularly the Shī'īs, have a defective *'aqīdah* (theological perspective), and thus killing them is no different than, for example, squashing a cockroach. According to them, anyone who falls outside the very narrow domain of a theological orientation defined by whatever survives of the parochial writings of Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb and self-servingly selective tracts taken from the works of Aḥmad ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyah is basically a *kāfir*.

Never mind the fact that the word *'aqīdah* does not appear in a single *āyah* or hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ), and that the label of *kufr*, in the prophetic example and in the words of scripture, is generally reserved for those who illegitimately and oppressively exercise power as well as their surrounding coterie of "intellectuals" and media propagandists who justify the self-ingratiating decisions of the ruling class. The designation of *kufr* does not typically apply to the ordinary individual because he has been oppressed to the point of not having the luxury to think clearly about belonging to an organized opposition to the truth, and to the authority of Allah (ﷻ).

Having said that, the concept of *'aqīdah* is not entirely useless, if applied within the context of its inception and subsequent devel-

opment. When the early Muslims advanced out of the Arabian Peninsula, they naturally came into contact with people of other faiths, particularly Christians from the Byzantine Empire and Zoroastrians from the Persian Empire. Their clerical hierarchies were working with a theology that had been evolving for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. And hence, they wanted to know what makes a Muslim distinct from a Jew, a Christian, or a Zoroastrian. In response to this challenge, the early Muslims, more specifically the Mu'tazilites who did the most work in this area, began to develop and enunciate the Islamic theology.<sup>469</sup> Note that, in this context, the concept of *'aqīdah* emerged to distinguish a Muslim from the people of previous scripture, not to separate Muslims from other Muslims. But the criminal governments ruling over the Muslims of that time used the idea as a political weapon to eliminate critics and rivals who were calling for a legitimate assumption and exercise of power. With this as a precedent, the felonious governments ruling over the Muslims today are still using the same methods to silence legitimate opposition to unjust policies.

Let it be abundantly clear: the process of qualifying a universal *'aqīdah* for all Muslims requires a *shūrā*, that is, participation and deliberation by all of the learned Islamic representatives of positions that have a differing view on the matter. Convergence can only take place after a discussion of the important issues, not by a government endorsing one position and then ramming it down the throats of everyone else. At the time the concept was in its initial germination stages, there was a high degree of intellectual Islamic ferment, which pulled in the thoughts, positions, and justifications of a wide range of views. Before this unofficial *shūrā* could take its necessary course to reach a final decision on the matter, corrupt governments institutionalized one position or the other, generally based on whichever position would sustain their political advantage, and then used it to kill off all political, not necessarily theological, dissent. After a thousand years, this model has witnessed little evolutionary progress, and thus had it not been for the backing of British colonialism through the agency of Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd, Wahhābism, with its parochial view of *tawḥīd* and its reduc-

tionist criteria for *takfīr*, would never have emerged as a theological (and ultimately political and military) force.<sup>470</sup>

Historically, the heavy-handedness of the governments in Muslim lands forced all dissenting positions into hiding, thereby replacing what would have been an unencumbered *shūrā* with individual scholarship that, by its very nature, could never be challenged in a free and open forum by other people of core knowledge. Designating an *'aqīdah* requires particular positions to be measured and tested according to the reference points of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Such a process cannot belong to the domain of actions of an individual, regardless of the wealth of knowledge accrued by any one individual scholar. But because of the peculiar unfolding of Islamic history, in which the Muslims were ruled by non-representative, illegitimate governments, most of whom curtailed internal dissent by imprisonment, banishment, murder, or an impending threat of bodily injury, the Muslims of today have inherited a legacy of scholarly discord that has contributed in large measure to the exploitable fault lines in the contemporary Muslim world.

Thirteen hundred years behind schedule, such a *shūrā* finally took place between the (Shī'ī) scholarly establishment in Qom, Iran and the (Sunnī) scholarly establishment in al-Azhar, Egypt, in what came to be known as Dār al-Taqrīb bayna al-Madhāhib al-Islāmīyah (The Institute for Reconciliation among the Islamic Schools of Thought), 1948.<sup>471</sup> Note that this effort was not connected to the activity or policies of either of the two countries' governments, both of which were monarchies sustained in power by the remnants of a European colonialism that had dismembered the Ottoman Sultanate. In the short decade of its existence, despite all of the progress made, this independent and non-partisan *shūrā* was forcefully terminated by Egyptian strongman Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir, no doubt because he felt that Muslim unity along non-sectarian lines was a competitive antagonist to his program of Arabian unity along lines of racial exceptionalism. 'Abd al-Nāṣir and his Arab nationalist dream of an Arabian super-state came to an ignominious end when the Arabian armies lost the Six-Day War, and ceded to Zionist occupation the West Bank, Gaza, the Sinai, the Golan

Heights, and an archipelago that belonged to Saudi Arabia.<sup>472</sup> After the Islamic Revolution in Iran (1979), the work of Dār al-Taqrīb was reenergized under the new name Majma' al-Taqrīb bayna al-Madhāhib al-Islāmīyah (The International Forum for the Proximity among the Islamic Schools of Thought) by the late Imam Khomeini, who also stipulated that Sunnī fiqh be taught at the Shī'ī seminaries in Qom.<sup>473</sup>

After 25 years of deliberation and through the participation of qualified representatives from all the major Islamic schools of thought and from the major Islamic political movements and parties, the Majma' finally reached the conclusion that anyone claiming to be an adherent of one of eight major Islamic schools of thought is considered to be a Muslim. These eight comprise the four well-known Sunnī schools (Ḥanafī, Shāfi'ī, Mālikī, Hanbalī), the two significant Shī'ī schools (Ja'farī, Zaydī), the Zāhirī school (founded by Abū Sulaymān Dāwūd ibn 'Alī ibn Khalaf al-Zāhirī), and the Ibādī school (remnants of the Kharijites).<sup>474</sup> This means that by virtue of this āyah, **“But whoever deliberately slays another committed Muslim, his requital shall be Hell, therein to abide...”** no Muslim who claims to be a Sunnī is allowed to kill another who claims to be a Shī'ī or vice versa, using only the difference in school of thought as a justification for *takfir*. To qualify this proscription further, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

*[One] Muslim is the brother of [another] Muslim: he does not betray him, and he does not deceive him, and he does not forsake him. It is forbidden for any Muslim to violate [another] Muslim's womenfolk, to confiscate his property, and to take his life. Taqwā is here [and he pointed to his heart]. Even to disrespect his brother Muslim is bad enough.*<sup>475</sup>

To close out this discussion, the issue of *'aqīdah* and the accompanying criteria for *takfir*, at least in the developmental stages of an emerging Islamic theology, were never about declaring a quietist Sunnī a good Muslim and a militant Shī'ī a *kāfir*, or some other rendition of this divisive binary dichotomy. It only became that way

because of the intrusion of fraudulent power positions who used these immature (underdeveloped) concepts as a political cudgel to maintain and expand the privileges of exclusivity: greed, lust, laziness, a law that does not restrain the proclivities of the ruling elite, and a command position that renders everyone else as slaves.

Allah (ﷻ) teaches the graduates of this Qur'an that, while on a military mission, they are not to launch into hostilities against others whom they are not familiar with until they have enough substantial and confirmed information about them. Moreover, if these others were to express their acquiescence and conformity to Allah (ﷻ) verbally, this verbal expression should suffice in the absence of contradictory behavior or evidence to the contrary,

**[Hence], O you who are committed [to Allah], when you go forth [to war] in Allah's cause, use your best judgement, and do not — out of a desire for the fleeting gains of this worldly life — say to anyone who offers you the salutation of peace, "You are not a committed Muslim," for with Allah there are gains abundant. You, too, were once in the same condition, but Allah has been gracious to you. Use, therefore, your perceptiveness: verily, Allah is always cognizant of what you do (4:94).**

Many narratives have tried to explain the context of this *āyah* — the background information and the circumstances for which it was revealed. The long and short of it is that a contingent of Islamic troops came upon a shepherd who greeted them with the salutation *al-salāmu 'alaykum*. This inferred that he was a Muslim, but some of these soldiers felt he was a pretender, trying to project the impression that he was a Muslim. And thus the Muslim troops subsequently killed him. This *āyah* came to protect innocent human life by barring such impulsive and bloody acts. Muslims under arms should never be concerned with the spoils of war or the material consequences of winning. Muslims are people of principle in peace as well as in war.

The lingering tendencies from a previously psychopathic and materialistic *jāhili* lifestyle were not allowed to intrude into the early Muslims' new Islamic way of life. In *jāhiliyah*, there was fanaticism, ultra-nationalism, chauvinism, and jingoism. But, by entering Islam, the committed Muslims around Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) had already turned that page; now they were living and dying for the high standard that was the Qur'an and Islam. In their *jāhiliyah* they were impulsive, but now they were expected to be objective, mature, and responsible. Discipline, one of the key developmental building blocks of *taqwá*, goes with this Qur'an all the way to the most tense and nerve-racking moments in life at the battlefield.

Besides, Muslims with power should remember that, once, they too had no power and were forced to conceal their identity if they feared death. They should realize there may be other people who are constrained to do what the Muslims were compelled to do when they were weak, exposed, and threatened with death and annihilation. Could it have been that, when the Islamic military contingent showed up, this man tending to his sheep got caught between divulging his true Islamic identity and concealing it from his own oppressive (*mushrik*) society? And that once he expressed himself by the greetings of peace he fell victim to the paranoia of Muslim men in arms — who should have known better? This is the apprehension and affection, the cognizance and compassion, as well as the sensitivity and sympathy that comes from being a Qur'anic warrior.

A person's judgement should come from the obvious and not the obscure, from the apparent and not from the assumed. This very important rule comes out of the understanding of the aforementioned *āyah*. Simply because an individual or a group has a reason to believe something, it does not justify the consequence. "Reason to believe" does not substitute for evidence and confirmation.

When the Muslims assume a war footing, their conscience should reign supreme — not their élan or superpatriotism, so to speak. Even in war zones, where it is very dangerous and the impulse of self-preservation often overrules a more cogent consideration of a tense situation, no Muslim has the right to "shoot first and ask questions later." This is why anyone who is taught to use a

weapon or trained to fight, especially a soldier, ought to simultaneously and primarily be acculturated into a moral program that, at the very least, holds all innocent life sacrosanct.

But is this what happens in the “civilized” West today? In the most professional armies of the world, and in history? In the American military, impressionable young recruits are taught to demonize entire societies (civilians, women, children, elderly, all potential males of military age, etc.) — not just their soldiers — as barbarians, as virtual anathemas to any kind of civil society, and as devils incarnate. The film industry and the media conglomerates give this “demented other” a dark, unscrupulous, villanous, and wanton visual image. Reinforcing this, digital gaming products are rolled out with more and more sophisticated, “lifelike” war games that desensitize the participants (generally young men who are potential soldiers) to the most degrading levels of violence against this despised other. And while all this is going on, fanatical evangelical preachers and doctrinaire think tanks drive this image into a social narrative of fear that justifies visiting any manner of atrocity upon innocent human beings belonging to the other.

What did the US government do in response to damning public testimony by the relatives of those killed in predator drone attacks — in the tribal areas of Pakistan and the mountainous regions of Yemen — that the vast majority of those who lost their lives were civilians? Did it try to limit this remote assassination campaign so as not to cause civilian casualties? Did it try to reassess its targeting criteria? No, quite to the contrary, it simply came out and changed the definition of who a *civilian* is; now, according to the US government, that is, specifically the Obama administration, any male of military age (from 16–60 years of age) in the strike zone of an assassination drone is considered to be an enemy combatant.<sup>476</sup> With the parallel consideration that the entire Muslim East is a war zone, this means that virtually all Muslim males, who live in a country branded by the US as harboring terrorists, are no longer regarded as civilians. Similarly, according to crusading Israeli rabbis, Israeli soldiers have the “right” to murder Palestinian children because they will eventually grow up to be militants or terrorists.<sup>477</sup>



## Jihad and *Hijrah* Are Relevant to Each Other

- (4:95) Such of the committed Muslims as remain militarily inactive — other than the disabled — cannot be deemed equal to those who strive hard in Allah’s cause with their possessions and their lives: Allah has exalted those who strive hard with their possessions and their lives far above those who remain sluggish [and militarily inactive]. Although Allah has promised the ultimate good to all [committed Muslims], yet Allah has exalted those who strive hard [and struggle] above those who remain passive by [promising them] a mighty reward —
- (4:96) [Many] degrees thereof — and forgiveness of sins, and His grace; for Allah is indeed much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace.
- (4:97) Behold, those whom the angels gather in death while they are still sinning against themselves, [the angels] will ask, “What was wrong with you?” They will answer, “We were too weak on earth.” [The angels] will say, “Was, then, Allah’s earth not wide enough for you to forsake the domain of evil?” For such, then, the goal is Hell — and how evil a journey’s end!
- (4:98) But excepted shall be the truly helpless — be they men or women or children — who cannot bring forth any strength and have not been shown the right way:
- (4:99) As for them, Allah may well efface their sin; and Allah is indeed an absolver of sins, much-forgiving.
- (4:100) And he who forsakes the domain of evil for the sake of Allah shall find on earth many a lonely road, as well as life abundant. And if anyone leaves his home, fleeing from evil to Allah and His Apostle, and then death overtakes him — his reward is ready with Allah: for Allah is indeed much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace.
- (4:101) And when you go forth [to war] on earth, you will incur no sin by shortening your *ṣalāh* if you have reason to fear that those who are bent on denying Allah might sud-

لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ  
اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ  
دَرَجَةً ۗ وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ۗ وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا  
عَظِيمًا ﴿٩٥﴾ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْهُ وَمَغْفِرَةً وَرَحْمَةً ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿٩٦﴾  
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْتُمُ الْمُتَلَيَّكَةَ ظَالِمًا ۖ أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ ۖ قَالُوا كُنَّا  
مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَسِعَةً ۖ فَهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا  
فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَاوَأْتُهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿٩٧﴾ إِلَّا الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ  
الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانَ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩٨﴾  
فَأُولَٰئِكَ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَن يَعْفُوَ عَنْهُمْ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَفُورًا غَفُورًا ﴿٩٩﴾ وَمَنْ  
يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَاعًا كَثِيرًا ۖ وَسِعَةً ۗ وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ  
بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۖ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكُهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ  
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَإِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ  
أَنْ تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ إِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۗ إِنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ  
كَانُوا لَكُمْ عَدُوًّا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٠١﴾ وَإِذَا كُنْتَ فِيهِمْ فَأَقَمْتَ لَهُمُ الصَّلَاةَ  
فَلْتَقُمْ طَائِفَةً مِنْهُمْ مَعَكَ وَلِيَأْخُذُوا أَسْلِحَتَهُمْ ۗ فَإِذَا سَجَدُوا

فَلْيَكُونُوا مِنْ وِرَائِكُمْ وَلَتَأْتِ طَآئِفَةٌ أُخْرَى لَمْ يُصَلُّوا  
 فَلْيُصَلُّوا مَعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا حِذْرَهُمْ وَأَسْلِحَتَهُمْ ۗ وَدَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ  
 تَغْلِبُونَ عَنْ أَسْلِحَتِكُمْ وَأَمْتِعَتِكُمْ فَيَمِيلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَيْلَةً وَاحِدَةً  
 وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ كَانَ بِكُمْ أَذًى مِنْ مَطَرٍ أَوْ كُنْتُمْ مَرَضَىٰ  
 أَنْ تَضَعُوا أَسْلِحَتَكُمْ ۖ وَخُذُوا حِذْرَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا  
 مُهِينًا ﴿١٠٢﴾ فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعودًا وَعَلَىٰ  
 جُنُوبِكُمْ ۗ فَإِذَا اطْمَأْنَنْتُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ ۗ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى  
 الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَوْقُوتًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَلَا تَهِنُوا فِي ابْتِغَاءِ الْقَوْمِ ۗ إِنْ  
 تَكُونُوا تَأْمُونًا فَإِنَّهُمْ يَأْمُونُ كَمَا تَأْمُونُ ۗ وَتَرْجُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا  
 لَا يَرْجُونَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٠٤﴾

denly cause you to be at odds with each other: for, verily, those who deny Allah are your open foes.

- (4:102) Thus, when you [Muhammad] are among the committed Muslims and about to lead them in *ṣalāh*, let [only] part of them stand up with you, retaining their arms. Then, after they have finished their *ṣalāh*, let them provide you cover while another group, who has not yet prayed, shall come forward and pray with you, being fully prepared against danger and retaining their arms: [for] those who are bent on

denying Allah would love to see you oblivious of your arms and your equipment, so that they might come at you full force [in a surprise attack]. But it shall not be wrong for you to lay down your arms [while you pray] if you are troubled by rain or if you are ill; but [always] be fully prepared against danger. Verily, Allah has readied shameful suffering for all who deny Allah!

- (4:103) And when you have finished your *ṣalāh*, remember Allah — standing and sitting and lying down; and when you are once again secure, observe your *ṣalāh* [fully]. Verily, for all committed Muslims *ṣalāh* is indeed a sacred duty linked to particular times [of day].
- (4:104) And be not faint of heart when you seek out the [enemy] host. If you happen to suffer pain, behold, they suffer pain even as you suffer it: but you are hoping [to receive] from Allah what they cannot hope for. And Allah is indeed all-knowing, wise (al-Nisā':95–104).

This is the third of the two previous sequels — all of them centering around military responsibilities, the nature of combat, and the perimeters of warfare. The central theme common to these lessons is the overriding issue of political asylum and relocation (*hijrah*) primarily from *mushrik* Makkah to Islamic Madinah. The consolidation and institutionalization of the Islamic will in Madinah highlights the relevance, the vantage, and the significance of all Muslims coming together in one state for the purpose of resisting the all-out war launched against them by an alliance of *kāfir* forces. Even for those Muslims who chose not to migrate to Madinah, there came a time when the commitment to Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) took precedence over comfort with family in *kāfir* Makkah, or over lucrative business in a society at war with a Muslim's faith, conviction, and ambition. This emerging forerunning position of Madinah compared to Makkah, in contrast to the historical precedent, may go a long way to explaining the lead-off *āyah* in this section,

**Sedentary Muslims of commitment — except if they are disabled — are not comparable to those who struggle and battle for the cause of Allah with their luxuries and with their lives. Allah gives priority to those who struggle with their luxuries and with their lives over the languid. Yet both have been promised a merit; still Allah prefers those who struggle over those who are lethargic by a magnitude of an outstanding privilege... (4:95).**

These sedentary types were not to be found in Madinah except for those *munāfiqs* who were described in the previous lesson.

In addressing the ones who are excited about making a secure commitment to Allah (ﷻ), the tempo of these *āyāt* alerts them to, and admonishes them against, the fate of those who are “Muslims” and linger behind, being content with belonging to a society at war with the Islamic authority and people. The latter become the object of heavenly warnings when they are able to relocate and do not do so; if these able-bodied Muslims insist on belonging to an enemy state, which is at war with an Islamic state, and die in such circumstances, then, in that condition of injustice to their own selves, their lives will be terminated by angels, **“Their abode is Hell and what an awful fate.”**

In the paragraph that follows, Allah (ﷻ) shows how He takes care of those who made the effort, for His cause and on His path, to relocate from a *kāfir* state to an Islamic state. No doubt, there is a fear of the future, of the unknown, and of uncertainties when a committed Muslim leaves his birthplace, his hometown, and his folks for the ideological standard of Islam and the faithful trust in Allah (ﷻ). These Qur’anic passages clearly demonstrate that *jihad* and *hijrah* are relevant to each other. Allah (ﷻ) outlines in this expanding dynamic how an Islamic authority is to treat all societies belonging to the materialistic world, including those Muslims who still live in that materialistic non-Islamic hemisphere.

A committed Muslim always has one foot in the transient world and the other foot in the permanent one. The Qur’an constantly reinforces this dual consciousness, and since war is a perma-

nent feature of sentient life on earth, it is only natural for there to be a unit of instruction on how to perform *ṣalāḥ* at a time when the Muslims are gripped by fear as a consequence of war or *hijrah*. This concern with *ṣalāḥ* underscores how important it is for Muslims to maintain their daily petition to Allah (ﷻ). This can also serve to boost the morale of Muslims who need all the encouragement they can get while they exchange fire with enemies who are all around and ready to pounce on them from all directions.

This lesson winds down with a key insight to inspire the Muslims with confidence and to give hope to all who opt for jihad on a path to Allah (ﷻ) even though the agony and the pain at times may appear to be bitter and unbearable. There is a juxtaposition between the confidence-centered *mujāhids* from the Muslims and their worldly-centered enemies,

**[You struggling Muslims] do not lose momentum in pursuing the [hostile] herd... if you are in pain, they are in pain as you are, and you have hope in Allah, which they do not have... (4:104).**

And this is the distinguishing difference: both the devout Muslims and the earnest *kāfirs* feel the pain of war, but the advantage of the devout and *ṣalāḥ-going* Muslims is their hope, faith, and yearning for Allah (ﷻ) — something the *kāfirs* and their militaries could never have.

The words of Allah (ﷻ) go deep inside the psychology of the Muslims and give them victory in their hearts and in the grain of their thoughts. When victory is rooted in the soul and branches out into life, no force on earth can be capable of defeating it. The fact of the matter is that this Qur'an has taken the war into the dimensions of the *ākhirah*; so if a Muslim falls at the war front he rises in victory in heaven. There is no such word as *defeat* when committed Muslims are in the company of Allah (ﷻ), a consuming presence that even circumscribes the battlefield. *Ṣalāḥ* and its performance are the fount of triumph, whichever way that may turn out to be: victory or martyrdom (*naṣr* or *shahādah*). These *āyāt*

take everything into consideration: the ferocity of the enemy, the power-attachment to Allah (ﷻ) by the combat-ready Muslims, the superiority of the fighting Muslims due to the fact that they are in the care of Allah (ﷻ), the alertness that is part of Islamic discipline, as well as the vulnerability and exposure of the Muslims because of their apathetic and disinterested types — the *munāfiqs*, the *qā'idūn*, and the *mu'awwiqūn* (the dual-loyalists, the sedentary, and the obstructionists).

Such an Islamic social bloc of people stands out for internalizing the depth of education presented in these penetrating *āyāt*, and then reflecting that in a social cohesion capable of withstanding hardened enemies coming at it from the exterior and sanctimonious enemies trying to fracture it from the interior. In spite of all these elements exerting their utmost to chop and chip away at this Islamic social bloc, it managed to withstand, overcome, and defeat them all. In the process it absorbed all these other societies and opened the doors for all their desperate peoples living under oppressive conditions to join this heavenly caravan and be honored by its scriptural procession. As the modernities and the “technologically” advanced countries around were crumbling, not to mention the other traditional and cultural societies, the Muslims, by contrast, were truly on a civilizational course. The world was wide-open for Allah's (ﷻ) people to humbly show everyone else the way.

### Jihad-Ready Muslims Enjoy a Higher Rank with Their Lord

**Immobile Muslims of commitment — except if they are disabled — are not equal to those who struggle and battle for the cause of Allah with their wealth and their health; Allah honors those who struggle with their wealth and health over the immobile. Yet both have been promised a deservingness; still Allah favors those who struggle and battle over those who are immobile by a magnitude of prime privilege (4:95).**

This subject matter deals with a social condition prevalent at the time this Qur'an was first communicated. It was exemplified by those individuals who were loath to spend their time, money, effort, and resources for the cause of Allah (ﷻ). To them, a jihad that will cost money and lives was undesirable. Such an attitude may include those "Muslims" who were indisposed to move from *kāfir* Makkah to Muslim Madinah because they wanted to continue running their businesses in Makkah, even though Makkah's army was attacking Madinah. The Makkan law did not permit Muslims who were living there to move to Madinah and take their possessions, wealth, and assets with them. These Muslims of weak will also did not want to pick a fight with the Makkan authority as they knew that they would have to eventually "sneak out" of Makkah if they ever wanted to relocate to Madinah. Moreover, by being vocal about their oppression, these "Muslims" did not see any "wisdom" in attracting the wrath of the authorities in Makkah. Even the expressed intention of a Muslim in Makkah at that time to relocate to Madinah would set into motion a series of unpredictable measures by the *mushrik* authorities: imprisonment, "house arrest," social pressures, and even torture. The authorities at war with Islam in Makkah were not going to countenance a drainage of their own population in favor of a "popular Madinah."

This disinclination to sacrifice for the cause of Allah (ﷻ) may also extend into an Islamic state where there may be a sector of the population whose members are not at all inclined to spend their money or lose their lives for Allah (ﷻ). These individuals do not fall into the category of the *munāfiqs* who were dead set against Islamic military service because of their allegiance to *kufr*. The particular description here refers to Muslims whose allegiance is unquestionably to Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ), but who at a "gut level" are not motivated to share the burdens of war and the demands they place on members of society.

It is this hesitancy and certain degree of unwillingness to commit to a necessary war effort that this *āyah* is healing. Even though the peculiar context may relate to that of the recalcitrant Arabians of those times, this *āyah* in a more general sense, because of the



human condition and the consistent need of human nature for moral guidance, is speaking to all people who display the same type of attitude as they balk at the responsibilities of war. One social attitude that needs to take root in Islamic societies today is that Muslims who go to war, spend their money, and sacrifice for the cause of Allah (ﷻ) in times of war and duress are not to be equated with bone-lazy and slow-moving Muslims who do just the opposite. Of course Muslims who are either handicapped and incapacitated (physically unable), or too destitute (without discretionary funds — financially lacking) are exempt from this category of war dodgers, **“Immobile Muslims of commitment — except if they are disabled — are not equal...”**

Looking at it in a certain way, this *āyah* could be construed as setting up a kind of class differentiation in Muslim society, but not of the variety that political science students are familiar with in Marxist-Leninist society. Rather Allah’s (ﷻ) words are building a consciousness that is able to differentiate between forward and inspired Muslims who forgo the most precious things in worldly life on one hand, and the reactive and subscript Muslims who squinch at the idea of giving, spending, and maybe ultimately dying for Allah (ﷻ) on the other. Listen closely,

**Docile and placid committed Muslims — except if they are invalids — are not comparable to those who contest and combat for the cause of Allah with their money, manner, and mode; Allah appreciates in rank order those who struggle with their money, manner, and mode over the slack and sluggish (4:95).**

This rank order may be explained by a couple of hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ),

*Behold! Paradise has a hundred ranks that Allah has allocated for those who struggle and strive for Him. What separates each rank from the other is the distance between heaven and earth.*<sup>478</sup>

*“Whoever takes aim and fires [in a war setting] has gained his privileged rank. A man stepped up to the Prophet (ﷺ) and inquired, “O Messenger of Allah! But what is a rank?” He replied, “It is not the threshold of your mother’s doorstep. A rank is spread apart from another rank by a hundred years.”*<sup>479</sup>

Nonetheless, after stating that there is a “world (distance) of higher status” between lackadaisical Muslims and combat Muslims who are fired up to do whatever it will take to support His cause, Allah (ﷻ) does say He has apportioned worthiness to all, **“Allah has promised elemental value to all [committed Muslims].”** After all, *īmān* is intrinsically meritorious. After acquiring *īmān*, people are ranked in as much and as far as they can go in shouldering the responsibility of *īmān* and carrying out its duties. The expression of *īmān* is not the number of days fasted or the number of prostrations performed; rather it is the amount of money spent and the loss of life and limb for the cause of Allah (ﷻ). This point has to be understood by today’s mellow Muslims who have turned the barometer of faith upside down. Nowadays, people in general and Muslims in particular gauge a person’s “faith” or *īmān* by the degree to which he is “religious,” that is, by the number of times he has gone to Hajj or how overtly and religiously “pious” he may be. The true scale and measurement of *īmān*, as is so plainly and intelligibly expressed here, is the struggle and sacrifice that are demonstrated through financing a jihad or participating personally in one.

Another point that deserves to be highlighted here is that in an Islamic population there will be some people who do not want to fight in a war because their hearts are not with the Muslims and the Islamic leadership; their loyalty is located with the *kāfirs* and their internal thoughts are on the side of Allah’s (ﷻ) enemies. Though these types may have Islamic appearances, Islamic habits, and Islamic names, they are, in the purview of life-definitions, *munāfiqs*. However, within this same pool of people in an Islamic society, there will be Muslims who do not want to engage in combat activities, not because they do not believe in the Islamic leadership or they root openly for the *kāfirs*, but because they are simply averse to fighting

due to their own delinquency and indolence. They simply cannot muster enough motivation, courage, and drive to give of their belongings and their beings at the war front for the war effort. These motivating Qur'anic words are intended to stimulate their ambition and to excite their drive. Not to be trivialized is the infectious effect of peer pressure, when highly motivated Muslims may exert positive influence on these unenthusiastic and lukewarm Muslims.

The *āyah* returns to reiterate how essential it is to have an Islamic response to the challenge that has taken on a military character represented by the armies of *kufṛ*,

**And Allah has preferred the combat Muslims to the sit-back Muslims in a magnitude of much higher rank; [many] degrees thereof — and forgiveness of sins, and His grace; for Allah is indeed much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace (4:95–96).**

The Qur'an and its eternal words are in pursuit of the best that is in man. A commitment to Allah (ﷻ) comes along with an ambition to fulfil His will on earth. This ambition drives its possessor to do whatever has to be done regardless of what the psychological, social, or military fallout is going to be. The words of Allah (ﷻ) move directly into the area of this innocent ambition and reinforce it with assurances of a tomorrow that is more preferable than today. There is status in obeying Allah (ﷻ) all the way to sacrificing one's life, there is forgiveness of sins in this elevated motivation, and finally there is Allah's (ﷻ) grace, which engulfs a regimented and highly disciplined Muslim.

These textual lessons came to remedy human and social problems that were a part of life during the formative years of that first Islamic social milieu. Following the meanings of these *āyāt* makes the reader more sensitive to how human nature works. It also makes one more attuned to the way human societies work. In an Islamic society, some of its people may have ascended to the ultimate level of struggle and combat readiness — those who would respond to Allah (ﷻ) in a heartbeat. But along with these accom-

plished Muslims there will always be those who drag their feet, trying to evade any assignment that translates into spending of their wealth and giving their time and lives for the cause of Allah (ﷻ).

When these individual features and social traits begin to surface in an Islamic society there is no reason to lose interest, feel frustrated, and then give up on Islam and scripture altogether. The main issue to not lose sight of is the fact that there still may be a healthy amount of goodwill, a deep sense of sincerity, and an attachment to Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) out of which improvement and onward motion is possible. This of course does not mean that those individuals in society who are weak spirited, tightfisted, and not team players should either be sanctioned or left alone in their attitude toward war. War is a difficult enterprise; it is a problematic task, and it is always hard to come to terms with its challenges and consequences. This is well known. But that does not mean the committed Muslims should “throw in the towel” and wash their hands of these Qur’anicallly defined responsibilities by caving in to the aberrant social attitude that opposes war, while not factoring in all the other good intentions toward Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ). If their morale is in the depths of despair, then it does not mean that the overall Muslim morale should sink with them. Rather the confident and determined Muslim morale should be buoyant enough for these others to swim to the shore of safety and security.

War is an unavoidable fact of life. In an Islamic society and in other societies there is a human persuasion that objects to war as a matter of moral rejection. There will always be those persons who will refuse to render military service because of a failure to understand the sanctity of life when it is threatened — life that has all the right in the world to survive, even through war. Some of these war objectors may even use a religious text — generally out of context — to justify their belief. While the right to religious freedom does not extend to a refusal to serve in the military, the words of the Qur’an here have authorized noncombat status for those committed Muslims who have yet to see the light. They may be exempt from military service but that exemption does not and should not

erode the validity of war as outlined throughout this guiding Scripture. Note that the Qur'anic law does not release from obligation persons who oppose military service because of political, sociological, or philosophical views, or because of a merely personal "moral code." In Islamic society, those committed Muslims who try to dodge war are basically displaying an absence of motivation, not an objection to war itself.

In today's parlance, some of these people may be characterized as *conscientious objectors* — those who refuse compulsory military service on moral, religious, or political grounds.<sup>480</sup> However, this designation is not entirely relevant to the Islamic experience, in which wars are fought only for moral reasons, for the victory of justice over tyranny, and for the relief of the oppressed. Wars in the non-Islamic frame of reference are fought primarily for material reasons, for the extension of authoritarianism into other domains, and for the occupation of markets and resources. Unjust war attended by gratuitous murder and scorched earth breeds the kind of contempt from people of principle that has led, in the Euro-American experience with war, to conscientious objection and pacifism. It is only natural, and not to be unexpected, for people of conscience to protest wars of attrition, wars of occupation, wars of aggression, and wars without rules, all of which are linked to the ascension of Western secularism.

Because the Islamic approach to warfare is more principled than it is materialistic, it cultivates human nature to a loftier station, and thus tolerates developmental aberrations along the way. It appears that human nature is such that there will always be people who will balk at "plunging" into mortal danger; they appear to be afraid of sacrifices and the sheer magnitude of death in war scares them — even if they are Muslim citizens in an Islamic society where human life is honored beyond words. According to these *āyāt*, the remedy for this socio-military ill is not despair; rather it is stimulation, encouragement, and motivation. With those who exhibit these timorous tendencies, the social psychology of the Islamic fellowship should be strong enough to re-socialize this sedentary anomaly.

Devout Muslims have not been given the license to refuse military duty. The fact that some people will need more exposure to events and the nature of *kufr*'s opposition to Islam has led to an educational ambiance of leniency toward these "draft dodgers." In a sense, these excused Muslims — excused from military service until their conscience catches up with them — enjoy a type of preferential treatment in the hope that they will one day, sooner rather than later, realize that they cannot stand idly by when their own brothers, neighbors, friends, and acquaintances are falling at the war front. Whether a person is a committed Muslim unable to be motivated for war duty or a make-believe Muslim whose loyalty is on the opposite side of the firing line (a *munāfiq*) is a matter to be determined by the Islamic social solidarity and community cohesion that comes from the centrality of the *masjid* in Islamic neighborhoods, villages, and precincts.

Another all-important cognitive concept in these *āyāt* is the value of jihad conducted by those with the physical and financial wherewithal. There is a super mind at work in these *āyāt* — a super mind that understands what human belligerency is all about, what social hostilities are all about, what man's history is all about, and what economic and financial interests are all about. Jihad is not some curious response meant to deal with the peculiar issues of an ancient age. Jihad is an integral component of Islam as a *dīn*. Jihad is not a balance-of-power concept meant to have the Muslims play military chess with their enemies. Anyone who tries to frame jihad with such irrelevant insinuations is simply exposing how ignorant he is of these living *āyāt* and this vital Book. Had jihad been such a passing chapter in the history of civilization it would not have occupied all this area in the Qur'an with hundreds of *āyāt* pertinent to struggle, sacrifices, and *qitāl*. Jihad is prominent and jihad is essential in the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the Sīrah. If jihad had been an evanescent issue in the construct of this Ummah, Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) would not have inclusively, emphatically, and in perpetuity stated for all to hear until the end of time, "Whoever dies and has not gone to war or contemplated going to war dies on a streak of *nifāq*."<sup>481</sup>

Jihad is a very deeply ingrained principle in the Islamic divine doctrine. Therefore, anyone who professes an Islamic identity but then refuses to embark on a jihad is either “out of order” or a freak in Islamic society. A person who defies jihad is not contributing to the consolidation and healthy growth of an Islamic society. Given how other governments and their societies show a propensity to go to war against Muslims whose Islam flourishes in all spheres of human activity — statehood activities included — some Islamic scholars consider jihad to be a mainstay (*rukṅ*) of Islam. The fact that jihad has been presented in the Qur’an with such emphasis, special importance, significance, intensity, and forcefulness of expression places it in a central position in the Islamic movement, and in the lives of all Muslims whose hard work is a contribution for the march of Islam.

Yes, there were individual cases, here and there, in which Muhammad (ﷺ) refused to enlist a Muslim in the war effort. His refrain in these instances had more to do with personal or family humanitarian concerns than with arbitrarily excusing participation in the communal jihad. In the books of hadith, it has been reported that a man said to the Prophet (ﷺ), “I want to strive and fight for Allah’s cause.” The Prophet (ﷺ) asked him, “Do you have parents?” To which the man replied, “Yes.” Then the Prophet (ﷺ) advised him, “Strive and struggle for them [your parents].”<sup>482</sup> These were infrequent individual cases that were the exception to the rule; in this particular case, the Prophet (ﷺ) may have known of this man’s onerous family condition and hence wanted him to be excluded because of his family priorities. However, these isolated events cannot lead to the erroneous conclusion that jihad is outdated or an ancient practice. On the other hand, one should not jump to the other extreme and impute that Islam is a sword wielding religion that goes into the world chopping off people’s heads because they are not Muslims. The fact of the matter is that Islam condones militancy and military service when necessary because the nature of *kāfir* societies is hostile, the plans of *mushrik* militaries are aggressive and predatory, and the materialistic non-Islamic hegemonic powers have not given the Muslims one reason to feel that they are regimes of peace and administrators of justice.

In His infinite knowledge, Allah (ﷻ) knows jihad is a fact of Islamic life that kings and presidents hate. He knows that people in power will seek to disarm the Muslims in their minds before they demilitarize them at the battlefield. They know that Islam is not their way of life, Islam is not their toy, and Islam cannot be subdued by their militaries. This knowledge of theirs is ancient, current, and henceforward. They tried to defeat the early Muslims in Arabia and they will try to defeat the latter-day Muslims wherever and whenever.

The Muslims have to settle on the fact that arrogant powers are patronizing and swaggering. And thus, they will never come to terms with the values, principles, and morals of Islam; they cannot be fair when Islam is the issue. They will have a hard time giving Islam a chance even if some Muslims make a case for a peaceful, nonviolent, quiescent, and easy-going Islam. They know from their keen sense of history and survival that once the good in Islam begins to grow, it will threaten their fiefdoms, their kingdoms, and their turfs. The very existence of justice is an automatic threat to injustice, which, represented as it is by conglomerates and cartels, will opt for aggression resulting in wars. Big government, big business, and big militaries will try to suffocate Islam before it can even breathe. This is a long and extended lesson of history, and it has nothing to do with peculiar circumstances or unusual historical developments.

If anyone cares to scan through the history of Islam, he will find that jihad goes with Islam like “white on rice.” This necessary component of Islam has to take root in the human conscience. After that it can branch out into society and the world. An anti-Islamic, hostile world that is armed with weapons of evil has to be confronted by an enlightened Islamic world that is armed with the intentions of virtue and valor. The vainglorious “superpowers” who are flush with nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction can only be averted by the servants of Allah (ﷻ) who are captivated by His persistent intent and purpose. Jihad is the vehicle for this coming transformation.



### Oppressed Peoples Have a Right to Migrate to Secure Areas

The Qur'an develops social consciousness even further within the Muslim rank and file, just as it did with the early Muslims around Allah's Prophet (ﷺ). The *āyāt* go on to speak about those who remain settled in the land and legal system of *kufr* — Muslims who were not willing, in the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), to pack up and leave the social machinery that was waging war against the Islamic state and society. Not only were they bound by their wealth and vested interests in the complex capital of *kufr*, they had a disinclination to bear the pressures and hardships of a *hijrah*. What they lacked was motivation — the psychological feature that arouses one to act for Allah (ﷻ) and embark on the necessary *hijrah*. Similarly today, the same types of people spend the rest of their lives nested in the structure of *kufr* until finally the angels come to take their souls. The Qur'anic composition presents an unattractive and waspish image of what they turn out to be. The imagery here would make any sedentary person want to stand up, move on, and do anything to avoid the following reputation,

**Behold, those whom the angels gather in death while they are still sinning against themselves, [the angels] will ask, "In what condition were you?" They will answer, "We were too weak on earth." [The angels] will say, "Was, then, Allah's earth not wide enough for you to forsake the land of *kufr*?" For such, then, the destiny is Hell — and how evil a journey's end! Exempted shall be the truly helpless — be they men or women or children — who cannot bring forth any strength and have not been shown the right way; as for them, Allah may well efface their sin — and Allah is indeed an absolver of sins, much-forgiving (4:97–99).**

At that time in Makkah, after Muhammad (ﷺ) and his companions themselves had made the enormously trying transition from Makkah to Madinah, a psychological variable set in. There emerged some Muslims who were not willing to make that transi-

tion themselves. It was too much for them to “pluck their roots out of Makkah” and “begin a new life in Madinah.” The Islamic State in Madinah, though, had declared its ideological character; therefore, other Muslims from anywhere else were to expect and find Madinah to be their home away from home. The community of Muslims that did not endure the rigors of a *hijrah* was, more or less, a captive of its capital and earnings in a *kāfir* state. These Muslims knew that if they were to finally make up their minds and move from Makkah to Madinah, the *mushriks* who controlled Makkah were not going to permit them to take any of their belongings and possessions once they decided to leave Makkah.

At another level, this Muslim “colony” in Makkah felt that even if it was to leave for Madinah, its spirits were not sufficiently high to afford it the strength to weather the difficulties and challenges it may face when it goes to a “foreign land.” The remaining Muslims of Makkah knew that once they left the city, they will be perceived by the *mushriks* as active adversaries; therefore, they thought they could be targeted by the Makkan establishment. And they were not “ready” for that. Innocent in this “colony” of Muslims in Makkah were men, women, and children who truly and honestly could not make the *hijrah* to Madinah. Because of grinding poverty, physical handicaps, slavery, or a few other legitimate reasons, they could not secure a way out of Makkah or could not evade the security system in Makkah.

As it became more and more evident that the Islamic State in Madinah was not just another passing phenomenon, the *mushriks* of Makkah began turning up the heat on their Muslim constituents — the more so after these *mushriks* felt frustrated with their inability to apprehend Muhammad (ﷺ) and his companion. News that an Islamic power base was established in Madinah added rancor to an already resentful body of Makkan reactionary politicians. The defeat of Quraysh at the Battle of Badr did not make things any easier for the Muslims who were still living in Makkah. One can imagine how intense and how furious the Makkan royal house felt and how it would channel its ire and bitterness against those Muslims who were still within the Makkan jurisdiction. In a sense, these

Muslims in Makkah were caught between an ideological gravity toward Madinah and a financial gravity to remain in Makkah. Even with the wrath of Makkah falling on them ever more harshly, they still chose to stick it out there.

Some of these conflicted Muslims had to renounce their Islam in these circumstances. Others had to pretend they were *kāfirs* by concealing their real beliefs and convictions. They may even have had to go to the temples of the *mushriks* and engage in the traditional religious behavior so as to feign their integration. This “extreme” behavior was justified when Muslims did not have a government of their own, an authority belonging to them, and a state that would accommodate them. But once an Islamic state was in existence and once the Muslims had a “country” of their own, there was no reason to continue to be a victim of tyranny or a citizen of *kufr*. A person has no right to hide his Islamic identity when there is an Islamic state that is willing and capable of absorbing and assimilating him.

These Muslims of “self-interest” or what some people would call “commercialized Muslims” are characterized by the Qur’an as *zālimī anfusihim* (people of self-inflicted abuse) because they refuse to move from a constituency of *kufr* to a society of Islam. They have access to dignity, honor, and freedom in an Islamic state but they prefer to incur all the scandal, shame, and suppression that comes from feigning Islam in a state of *kufr*. Life for Muslims within a society governed by *kufr* is ugly, nasty, and brutish. According to these *āyāt*, they are not looked upon favorably by Allah (ﷻ), as they have been foretold of a hell and an awful fortune there. This may similarly apply to those Muslims who permit themselves to be exposed to and identified with the hard, day-to-day reality of their government’s anti-Islamic drive to cut off Islam at its authoritative level, that is, to defeat the Islamic state. The cadence of the Qur’an gives it this momentum,

**In fact, those who have been terminated by the angels of death while they are in a state of self-abuse are asked [by the angels], “In what were you involved?” They said, “We were objects of oppression!” [Then] they**

were told, “But was not Allah’s earth as broad in scope as to have you give up locales of tyranny?” (4:97).

This *āyah* sets out an international regulation for people who are oppressed in their own countries. It also specifies that oppressed Muslims have no excuse for not being able to traverse the national, racial, economic, and “legal” borders of the world to escape discrimination, alienation, and exclusion in their own geographical homeland when governments therein turn against them because they are Muslims. Migration — a movement of population within or between countries — has become ever more difficult with the passage of time, first, because the globe is turning into a village, and second, because the tracking and monitoring of people has become an art, a science, and an exclusionary policy. Typically, migration within countries has been preponderantly toward urban centers, seen possibly by migrants as attractive alternatives to rural overpopulation and its associated deprivation in some instances. International migration (emigration) may be a response to other factors, such as political threats against minority groups or warfare. Migrants, in a world that does not go by scripture, may not always be given the right to settle in those regions to which they travel, and may be treated as temporary refugees or stateless migrant laborers. In advanced, prosperous societies there has been a considerable out-migration of people from the cities to the surrounding countryside, a phenomenon known as *population turnaround*.

In the modern world, there are secular and material interferences with Allah’s (ﷻ) will on the level of population relations. The stern reality of contemporary times has imposed on people national structures that could care less what God is saying about freedom from oppression when it comes to oppressed peoples and oppressed Muslims. In one such intervention, secular lawmakers and their status-quo strategists have taken a Machiavellian interest in *demography* — a branch of sociology that studies the population patterns of the past, present, and future. Demography has been important in estimating future trends in population growth in order to calculate the pressures on global resources. If oppressed peoples

were given the legal right to move about on earth as Allah (ﷻ) had intended them to do so as to escape local oppression, this may, in the minds of world elites, wreak havoc on the control mechanisms they have imposed on these populations. The peoples of the world are now serving a larger program of production and profits. In the secular world, there is something called *population density* — a measure of the number of people living within a standard unit of area, useful for comparative purposes. For example, the population density of the Netherlands (1983) was 422.4 people/km<sup>2</sup> (1,094 people/mi<sup>2</sup>) and for Australia (1984) 2 people/km<sup>2</sup> (5.2 people/mi<sup>2</sup>). However, these are crude measurements, and take no account of the area of habitable land. Accordingly, population density may be calculated to relate population to cultivable land or some other economic indicator.<sup>483</sup> Man according to this scheme of thought is an economic statistic.

Another materialistic consideration that disregards the central role of tyranny in world populations has to do with what is called *overpopulation*. In the nation-state world, overpopulation is commonly understood as a density of population such that the available resources of an area are unable to support the resident people; this is contrasted with *underpopulation*, where the area is able to support a greater density. Even from this point of view, it is impossible to derive a precise figure for overpopulation as the concept is subjective and rarely related to any agreed minimum standard of living. It is important to take account of the area under consideration. For example, the crude population density of Chad is only 3.8 people/km<sup>2</sup> (9.8 people/mi<sup>2</sup>), yet the country could be regarded as overpopulated because the harsh environmental conditions mean that the land is unable to support that density. The daily (1978–1980) per capita calorific intake was 1,808, which is 76% of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization recommended minimum requirement.<sup>484</sup>

The world we live in today has failed to heed this important concept of alleviating injustice. In the first instance, the Muslims, even where they form a majority, are the proverbial social outcasts whenever and wherever they do not live in an Islamic society. The

Jewish people have experience with what this means but they neither have the scriptural foundation nor the integrational worldview the Muslims have to remake the world along the lines of an inclusive scripture such as the Qur'an.

One of the major symptoms of a world that has no room for the movement of oppressed peoples is the refugee problem. Refugees are persons or populations fleeing from oppressive or dangerous conditions (such as political, religious, or military persecution) and seeking refuge in a "foreign" country. In 1991, there were an estimated 17 million refugees worldwide, whose resettlement and welfare were the responsibility of the down-and-out United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).<sup>485</sup> An estimated average of 3,000 people/day become refugees. In Judeo-Christian history the term was originally applied to the French Huguenots who came to England after toleration of Protestantism was withdrawn with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.<sup>486</sup> Major refugee movements in 20th-century Europe include: Jews from the Russian pogroms (1881–1914) and again after the Bolshevik Revolution; White Russians from the USSR after 1917; Jews from Germany and other Nazi-dominated countries (1933–1945); the displaced people of WWII; and from 1991, victims of the civil wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>487</sup>

Many Chinese people fled the mainland after the Communist Revolution of 1949, especially to Taiwan and Hong Kong; large numbers of Latin Americans fled from Cuba, Colombia, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, and Central America when new governments took power; and tens of thousands of boat people left Vietnam after the victory of the North over the South. Refugee movements created by natural disasters and famine have been widespread, most notably in Ethiopia and Sudan, where civil war has also contributed. Between 1985 and 1989 the number of refugees doubled worldwide, and the Second Gulf War (1991) created 1.5 million Muslim refugees, though later some of them were able to return to their homes.<sup>488</sup>

In 1990, the largest single refugee groupings were Afghan Muslims (about 6 million, temporarily settled in Iran and Pak-

istan); Ethiopians (1.3 million, mostly Eritreans who have moved to Sudan); Mozambicans (1.2 million, displaced mostly to Malawi); Iraqis (600,000, predominantly Kurds who have settled in Iran); Somalis (400,000); Sudanese (400,000); Sri Lankan Tamils (300,000, some of whom have fled to India); and Cambodians (300,000, who live in refugee camps in Thailand). UNHCR's budget was \$550 million in 1990.<sup>489</sup>

In 2010, UNHCR statistics indicated that the top 10 UNHCR-monitored refugee origin countries were Afghanistan (2,887,123), Iraq (1,785,212), Somalia (678,309), Democratic Republic of the Congo (455,852), Myanmar (406,669), Colombia (389,753), Sudan (368,195), Vietnam (339,289), Eritrea (209,168), and Serbia (195,626); and this does not include the 4.8 million Palestinians still living in refugee camps or in the Arabian countries outside of their homeland in the Holy Land, or the hundreds of thousands of Syrian and Libyan refugees resulting from the US/Israeli/Saudi-sponsored regime change gambit in Syria and the US/NATO occupation of Libya.<sup>490</sup> Similarly in 2010, the top 10 UNHCR-monitored host countries that received refugees were Pakistan (1,740,711), Iran (1,070,488), Syria (1,054,466), Germany (593,799), Jordan (450,756), Kenya (358,928), Chad (338,495), China (300,989), the United States (275,461), and the United Kingdom (269,363).<sup>491</sup>

A distinction is usually made by Western nations between "political" refugees and "economic" refugees, who are said to be escaping from poverty rather than persecution, particularly when the refugees come from low-income countries. The latter group often becomes "illegal" immigrants, now sometimes referred to as "undocumented aliens." International law recognizes the right of the persecuted to seek asylum but does not oblige states to provide it. Only 0.17% of Western Europe's population are refugees. Internally displaced people, who have been forced to leave their homes but not crossed their country's borders, are not recognized as refugees; they are estimated, by UNHCR, to number around 27.1 million (2010). In actuality, due to funding limitations that prevent more exhaustive counting, to statistical approximations that substi-

tute for real on-the-ground information, and to definitions that exclude certain categories of displaced people, the figure above would probably be much higher. Nonetheless, in 2010, according to UNHCR, there were 43.3 million forcibly displaced people made up of the internally displaced (27.1 million), refugees (15.2 million), and asylum seekers (983,000).<sup>492</sup>

All of this data is gathered and synthesized by international human rights agencies that are sponsored by the Euro-American power club in the world. Are these figures all lies? Who is declaring war on whom? Refugees and the internally displaced are byproducts of wars of aggression. And so, it ought to be obvious to anyone analyzing this data that aggressive wars, which seek to impose secularization and democratization by force, are being fought in Muslim majority territories, against Muslims, by those who want to take Islam, the Qur'an, and the Prophet (ﷺ) away from the Muslims. The majority of the world's refugees and dislocated are Muslims and the only way to maintain this level of fear and instability is to launch into unending hostile crusades to prevent them from their God-given right of self-determination and self-rule. Not in one instance did any of these Muslim majority countries (Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya), from where most of the refugees and internally displaced are coming, aggress against their Euro-American occupiers. Even in the case of Afghanistan, over a decade after 9/11, the US government has yet to present verifiable evidence about the involvement of the then Afghan government in the 9/11 attacks, or the involvement of any of the accused groups, which that government was apparently sheltering.<sup>493</sup>

Wars that fall within the scope of moral rectification shelter the homeless, the dislocated, and the frightened. On the other hand, wars of aggression produce refugees who are left to their own wits for survival. In our world today, these wars are prosecuted by the secular military-industrial-congressional complex and financial-media conglomerate that regard the world's human and material resources to be their birthright — to use, waste, and dispose of as they please. They view the desperate millions who have lost their homes and livelihoods as having less value than minerals, ores,



fossil fuels, and the “right” of illegitimate royals, prime ministers, and corporate carpetbaggers to luxury, graft, and corruption. The desperate poor and the homeless are, to them, an uncomfortable accident of history that needs to be contained, corralled, and even killed so as to deaden its potential to demand what it is inalienably entitled to. Led by the tripartite syndicate of America (and its European satellites), Saudi Arabia (and its *salafi* subordinates), and Israel (and its financial and media empire), these generational aggressors feel no pain or remorse at the human suffering they are causing. After spending trillions of dollars on war-making, new weapons systems, ever more invasive, privacy-killing surveillance technologies, and the state security apparatus, they can only come up with paltry millions in their fiscal budgets for the tens of millions of displaced persons their wars are creating.

These aggressor nation-states are supposed to have the most vibrant economies in the world, with the highest gross domestic products (GDPs). Any impartial onlooker would suggest that these power countries have the economic capacity and the availability of uninhabited land to accommodate large numbers of displaced peoples. And so, this would beg the question: how many refugees did these countries actually host? All together, in 2011, of the over 40 million forcibly displaced people, and after destroying the infrastructure in Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Somalia, the United States (264,574), Israel (25,471), and Saudi Arabia (582) hosted less than 300,000 refugees.<sup>494</sup> What a travesty — especially after all the soaring rhetoric about human freedom, women’s rights, and the human dignity of the innocent children who cannot represent themselves, all of which demonstrates its emptiness and turgidity by virtue of what is done as opposed to what is said. In point of fact, Euro-American exclusivism has never opened its doors to the masses of refugees generated by its serial depredations in South America, Africa, Asia, and the Muslim East; it did not even liberally receive European Jews fleeing the German onslaught in WWII.

However, the countries and peoples who have absorbed the largest numbers of refugees are the ones who are routinely trashed by the secular, narcissistic, self-righteous, mainstream Western media

as terror havens, sanctuaries for extremists, and human rights violators: Pakistan, Iran, and Syria. Pakistan is one of the poorest countries in the world; the Islamic Republic of Iran has had to endure over 30 years of economic sanctions; and of all the Arabian countries, Syria is near the bottom in GDP. But this is in keeping with aspects of the Islamic culture of compassion, mercy, and concern for the fellow man that has, more or less, lingered in the Muslim East. It was the Muslims who welcomed pogroms of Jews and Unitarian Christians as they sought to escape confessional upheavals, ethnic cleansings, and political convulsions in the tumultuous 2,000-year history of Europe. The Muslims were magnanimous enough to allow them to build new communities without forcing them to assimilate, the opposite of what was done in Europe and America with these and other occupied peoples. If the truth be told, these communities still survive in the majority Muslim world, and many more of them would yet be there were it not for the Zionists murdering their own in order to scare them into migrating to Palestine.

Refugees are the barometer of independence. Nation-states that are truly independent do not spawn refugees. How many refugees come from the United States, Western Europe, and a short list of other power countries? All of the world's refugees come from countries that are confidence-lacking and dependent. This means that the nation-state model is a sham, a racket, and a shakedown. There is no such thing as independence when you cannot protect your own citizens from being expelled from their homes; there is no such thing as independence when your own government cooperates with and is coached by the aggressors; there is no such thing as independence when your infrastructure, which took decades to mature, is utterly devastated in the span of a few months; and there is no such thing as independence when you have foreign troops and alien military bases on your soil. This fiction is propagandized and promulgated to foster the false conviction that a territory, which was once ideologically, politically, and economically occupied, is now in control of its own destiny, despite the fact that all of its systems and institutions, and the way it thinks come from the departed oppressor.

If all the world's nations were truly independent, there is no way the United Nations Security Council could bully the General Assembly and habitually nullify its resolutions. Other than the permanent members of the Security Council, all other nations can only aspire to a faux-independence. Collectively, the permanent Security Council members — the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China — accounted for the origin of only 290,000 refugees (2010), all of whom came from China and Russia; this represents 0.7% of the forcibly displaced population in the world, and is only 10% of the number of refugees that came from only one country — Afghanistan.<sup>495</sup> You are independent when you demonstrate you can think for yourself, when you can adjudicate your own law, when you can confidently build your institutions around that law, and when you can manage your own security. Anything less is the kind of nation-state “independence” that is best practiced in the closet.

In a world remade according to scripture, human beings will feel a responsibility to offer freedom of relocation to the displaced so that they will not have to endure oppression and persecution. It cannot be claimed with any certainty whether the problem will disappear, but what can be said with confidence is that decision makers who answer to this Qur'an will find it among their God-given duties to open up the world and offer new frontiers for those who are looking for safety from persecution.

In a definition of responsibilities the words in this lesson are clear: no people should feel that persecution is an excuse. One cannot argue for his redemption on the Day of Judgment, “But, Lord, I or we were persecuted; those in power controlled our lives; we were humiliated and could do nothing about it!” No Muslim who reads the Qur'an should approach the moment of death feeling that he was harassed and oppressed, and was incapable of changing his situation. Muslims who live the meanings of this accessible Qur'an ought to know better than to waste a lifetime in a condition of mistreatment and despotism. They should not have to go to their Maker pleading that they were oppressed and lacked the mental and physical wherewithal to affect their status for the better — all

the more so when there was an Islamic state that beckoned their relocation and habitation. Even the angels are there at the moment of death to give them an immediate answer, “[The angels] said, ‘Was not Allah’s earth big enough to accommodate your escape from oppression...?’”

Taking a more precise look at their situation, it turns out that their residency in the domain of *kufir* — a domain at war with the Islamic state and society — had little to do with a genuine inability to move out; rather it had to do with their mania for money and their penchant for profits. Remember that these Muslims who were intertwined with *kufir* had an Islamic state to go to, but they refused to do so because their lucrative trade, their substantial investments, and their delicate commercial commitments would not allow them to pack up and leave. When the scene reaches this climax, the anticlimax is ready, “...they are destined for Hell and what a deplorable fate.”

Even so, with that said, to be fair to everyone the Qur’an states that there are exemptions. Muslims living and dwelling in the territory of *kufir* may be too old and infirm to travel to an Islamic state; likewise, there may be instances of women and children who have no means of making the journey. These and some others who have legitimate mitigating circumstances are left with hope that Allah (ﷻ) will offer them grace and approval,

**But excluded shall be the truly unable — be they men or women or children — who cannot muster any strength and who cannot find a way out [of established *kufir*]: as for them, Allah may well wither their sin, and Allah is indeed an absolver of sins, much-forgiving (4:98–99).**

This applies to all Muslims whenever these dynamics are in play. These are not lessons that collect the dust of history. They are instructions that are as fresh and energizing today as they were at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ). Muslims who are given the choice to relocate to an Islamic society, but opt for the confines of *kufir*

because they are more attached to their commerce than to their commitment and conviction, are doomed. The freedom that comes with expressing one's Islam among other like-minded Muslims cannot be turned down in favor of swelling one's bank account. There is no comparison.

### **Danger Should Not Be an Impediment to Making a *Hijrah***

Further down the road, this Qur'an offers those who embark on their uncertain *hijrah* reassurances, whatever the outcome may be. Setting out for a new land, to another territory, toward unfamiliar faces, to an uncommon environment, and with the expectation of other unexpected developments cannot be easy. But if Allah (ﷻ) accompanies the *muhājir*, he has nothing to worry about — even if he perishes in the process,

**And he who forsakes the domain of *kufr* for the sake of Allah shall find on earth many a lonely road as well as life abundant. And if anyone leaves his home, fleeing from structured *kufr* to Allah and His Apostle, and then death overtakes him, [then] his payoff is ready with Allah: for Allah is indeed much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace (4:100).**

Human beings naturally fear getting out of a certain routine, but at times, overcoming this kind of fear may be better for them. Simply stated, this *āyah* sets out to undo all the fears and apprehension that a person may have when he embarks on what seems like an unpredictable future. He is counseled to deposit his fate, his future, and his fears in Allah's (ﷻ) magnanimous and certain hands. The truth in this Qur'an does not tolerate any sugarcoating; hence if there are potentially annoying and frustrating times ahead, the Qur'an makes that clear. And this is a great blessing because it mentally and psychologically prepares the Muslim for a level of uncertainty that can be managed by a prescient set of decisions. But for whatever the committed Muslim readying himself for a *hijrah*

may not be able to foresee, there is the comfort and serenity that comes from knowing Allah (ﷻ) is also on this journey. Even when there is a danger of death, Allah (ﷻ) forewarns, not dropping it from the practical instructions of this guiding Book.

In this regard, what first needs to make sense to today's Muslims is that with all the structure, systems, and laws of worldwide *kufr*, with all of its political borders and immigration regulations, the fact of the matter remains: a *hijrah* is on a course to Allah (ﷻ). In a Muslim's world, struggle constitutes a course to Allah (ﷻ); combat is also a course to Allah (ﷻ); and here, *hijrah* is an avenue to Allah (ﷻ). All other journeys, travels, and relocations cannot be characterized as a *hijrah*, because all of those may be for the purpose of making more money or striking it rich, for escaping from personal and circumstantial difficulties, or for personal gratification and leisure. No other materialistic or worldly pursuits will ever substitute for a *hijrah fi sabilillah*, which was further qualified in a hadith of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ),

*All actions are based upon intentions, and whatever accrues to [the favor of] any person will come from what he intended. And so whoever made a hijrah to Allah and His Messenger, then his hijrah is for Allah and His Messenger; and whosoever made a hijrah for worldly life — to acquire [a piece of] it — or for a woman — to make love to her — then his hijrah is for what he migrated [to gain].<sup>496</sup>*

Whoever undertakes this type of *hijrah* will find the earth to be more accommodating than not. All other pieces will eventually — in Allah's (ﷻ) good time — fall into place, **“And he who relocates from the political authority of *kufr* to the authority of *imān* shall find on earth many a lonely road, as well as life abundant.”**

Having said that, human nature still has a tendency toward being hesitant and conservative; there is always that fear of an uncertain tomorrow. Even though survival and security may appear to be legitimate concerns at times, it is this perverse conservatism that makes many people accept the bad conditions they

are in. With this attitude and mentality they are apt to settle into oppression rather than to oppose it and exchange it for justice, equality, and a better life. This goes nowhere except to a last day in life when the angels take away these souls who have been unfair to their own selves.

It is Allah (ﷻ) who forges the facts of life. And He never fails to accompany those who set out in this world to look for justice and live with justice — especially when there is an Islamic state that represents justice. It may be that once a person steps out into the world seeking fairness and justice he dies on his way to it; but death is incidental here. Death was preprogrammed to happen in its moment whether the person went out into the world attempting to strive for justice or whether he was settled into his oppressive status quo. The moment of death cannot be hastened or delayed. Sometimes, though, this essential fact becomes fuzzy to a benighted human nature and therefore the *āyah* comes back to remind,

**And if anyone leaves his home, fleeing from the apparatus of *kufr* to Allah and His apostle, and then death overtakes him, [then] his tribute shall be ready with Allah: for Allah is indeed much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace (4:100).**

Therefore, a *muhājir* dying on the way to an Islamic society is essentially the same as him fulfilling his mission of actually reaching the Islamic state he sought to be a part of, as opposed to remaining in his *kufr* surroundings. Had this person stayed at home, the same moment of death would have overwhelmed him and he would have surrendered to Allah (ﷻ) while belonging to an anti-Islamic, *kāfir* government. With this lesson, because it shines with the truth that is needed in such conditions, the Muslims should now know better.

### **Ṣalāh Is a Muslim's Principal Ammunition in a Jihad**

An expedition through this lesson makes the Muslim realize that war is a psychological issue before it becomes a military issue. It is this Qur'an that primarily and fundamentally seeds Muslim souls with its movement, its first impression, and its first orientation days, months, and years before the cumulative total becomes the exchange of fire and the attack of armies at the battlefield. Through the Qur'an's confidence-building style, the Muslims realize that a war is won when the spirit is not defeated, even though a military campaign may not have been triumphant; and conversely, a war is lost when the spirit is subdued, even though a military campaign may have been victorious.

As these lessons proceed to purge our mental and emotional consciousness of all temporal fears, the concluding remarks of this section pertain to augmenting self-awareness with common sense in a situation where fear normally causes people to behave impulsively: on the warpath, in a state of military mobilization, or becoming a captive or prisoner of war. The presumption here is that the combatant Muslims' loss of freedom may lead them to renounce Islam. Thus, Muslims who find themselves in such grave and unsafe conditions are given the permission to abridge the amount of time they spend in *ṣalāh*. This is called *al-qaṣr min al-ṣalāh*, and this peculiar abbreviation of *ṣalāh* is altogether different from the permit given to those who are traveling or on a voyage,

**And when you set out [on a military campaign] on earth, you will incur no sin by reducing your *ṣalāh* if you have reason to fear *fitnah* befalling you from the *kāfirs*: for, in actuality, the *kāfirs* are your open enemies (4:101).**

The first consideration from this *āyah* is that a person committed to Allah (ﷻ) who goes out on a military assignment is in dire need of a fervent and passionate relationship with his Sustainer. He obviously needs all the morale he can build through the agency of this contact with Allah (ﷻ). This state of connectedness is the



only thing that counts, especially when there is a deadly enemy out there waiting for the appropriate place and time to attack. *Ṣalāh* is the most precious and advantageous intimacy a dedicated Muslim has with Allah (ﷻ); it is the pivotal armament among all the other things this mobilized Muslim has in his arsenal, “**And seek assistance through patience and *ṣalāh*...**” (2:45).

In the atmosphere of war, which in today’s world is almost unceasing, the commanders and soldiers in the militaries of the materialistic “Judeo-Christian” societies shout profanities and voice vulgarities at their adversaries, who are generally Muslims. In an Islamic military, the Muslim warriors’ language is the vocabulary of *ṣalāh*. They know Allah (ﷻ), they know they need Him, and they know that now they need Him more than ever because they are in hostile terrain. In a normal, civil (non-military) setting, *ṣalāh* requires *rukūʿ*, *sujūd*, *qiyām*, *duʿāʾ*, *qunūt*, etc. and all this takes extra time, which in a military climate could spell trouble, leading to ambushes, attacks, and possibly unnecessary injuries and casualties. A full-fledged *ṣalāh* with its requisite *rakʿahs* — two, three, or four — may use up the extra amount of time that within a military conflict is needed for military defense or the execution of military planning. Besides, sometimes *ṣalāh* itself may defeat the purpose of military camouflage or reconnoitering. The “civilian” performance of *ṣalāh* is not threatened with a breach of security because it takes place within an Islamic society that offers its citizens an overall ambiance of safety and protection. However, this type of *ṣalāh* cannot be the norm in military situations as it may compromise security. Therefore, as *ṣalāh* itself has to adjust to the larger human social condition when there are apposite reasons, this *āyah* mitigates the behavior of a potentially dogmatic or literalist human nature.

This *tafsīr* avoids long and detailed *fiqhī* minutiae on these types of issues; thus, simply stated, the *qaṣr* (diminution) of *ṣalāh* in this instance means that military personnel and all personnel on missions that are fraught with danger and vulnerability may compact their *ṣalāh*, not needing to stand and sit down, bow and kneel, stoop and prostrate, and go through any of the other physical motions associated with a conventional *ṣalāh*. A mobilized Muslim

may quietly verbalize the *ṣalāh* without going through all the other physical motions that attend the normative *ṣalāh*. When Muslims are on assignments that expose them to risks and peril their *ṣalāh* is not condensed in the way it is when they are on a voyage or a journey. In the latter case, the *ṣalāh* of four *rak'ahs* is scaled down to two; in this type of *qaṣr*, there is no fear of an impending *fitnah* — the possibility that an enemy will attack, kill, or capture the Muslim. The majority of *fiqhī* opinions agree that a person in travel status should condense his *ṣalāh*.

When a Muslim is doing his military duty, he is authorized by these *āyāt* to only pronounce his *ṣalāh*; in other words the physical performance of the *ṣalāh* is discontinued. However, the mental performance of it continues. Therefore, a Muslim on a military mission may mentalize his *ṣalāh* be he standing, sitting, riding, flying, etc. The *rūkū'* and *sujūd* may be gesticulated. Never at any time may a Muslim — even if he is on hazardous assignments — sever his *ṣalāh* with Allah (ﷻ). This is his most important weapon. In the meantime he continues to keep his eyes wide open regarding the *kāfir* enemy, **“Certainly, the *kāfirs* are your obvious enemy.”**

Within the fold of information about the *ṣalāh* of Muslims on assignment as they venture into enemy territory comes the information pertaining to the performance of *ṣalāh* in a state of fear (*ṣalāh al-khawf*) within active military exchange of fire with the enemy,

**Thus, when you [Muhammad] are among the committed Muslims and about to lead them in *ṣalāh*, let [only] part of them stand up with you, retaining their arms. Then, after they have finished their *ṣalāh*, let them provide you cover while another group, who have not yet prayed, shall come forward and pray with you, being fully prepared against danger and retaining their arms: [for] those who are in denial of Allah would love to see you oblivious of your arms and your equipment, so that they might fall upon you in a surprise attack. But it shall not be wrong for you to lay down your arms [while you pray] if you are troubled by rain or if you are ill;**

but [always] be thoroughly prepared against danger. Verily, Allah has readied shameful suffering for all who deny Him! And when you have finished your *ṣalāh*, be aware of Allah — at attention, at ease, and in coordination; and when you are once again secure, resume your full [unabridged] *ṣalāh*. Verily, for all committed Muslims *ṣalāh* is, of a certainty, a consecrated duty fulfilled at specific times [of the day] (4:102–103).

This Book has to be from Allah (ﷻ). The attachment to Allah (ﷻ) remains as strong in the midst of agitation and conflict as it is in the serenity of harmonious relations and freedom from disputes.

This reference to *ṣalāh* in unsettling circumstances is not meant to arouse the *fiqhī* passions of some scholars as much as it is meant to orient, educate, and prepare an Islamic discipline that is able to maintain its composure with Allah (ﷻ) when difficulty and distress are in the air. What stands out here is the fact that Muslims do not lose sight of Allah (ﷻ), even in the heat of war. This may sound like common sense; but a person who has not actually lived through the hell of war cannot precisely gauge the potential complications that arise in life-and-death situations. Another message that comes through these *āyāt* is that *ṣalāh* itself is ammunition. Dare we say it is the only ammunition there is. Thus, it has to be used in a way that does not turn out to be counterproductive.

The beaming first generation of Muslims who took these *āyāt* with them to the nasty climate of war were aware that *ṣalāh* is their link to Allah (ﷻ) — and it is Allah (ﷻ) who was substantially engaged in the war as they had given Him all they possibly could via their communion with Him,

And yet, [O Muslims], it was not you who killed them [the enemy], but it was Allah who killed them; and it was not you who discharged [your weapon, O Prophet], when you did discharge it, but it was Allah who discharged it; and [He did all this] in order that He might test the committed Muslims by a goodly test

of His own ordaining. Verily, Allah is all-hearing, all-knowing! This [was Allah's purpose] — and also [to show] that Allah renders vain the artful schemes of those who deny the truth (8:17–18).

No propaganda from their enemies could have them lose the slightest bit of confidence in the fact that Allah (ﷻ) was there for them, just as they were there for Him. There were no doubting Thomases and no detractors. They knew they were with Allah (ﷻ) and that Allah (ﷻ) was with them. This knowledge was not up for a political auction or *kāfir* negotiations. In fact, that is everything these combat Muslims had, and that is all they needed; they required nothing else whatsoever. This knowledge extracted from the Qur'an was the basis of their society, the foundation of their movement, and the discipline in their military. And in this Islamic milieu, *ṣalāh* was the principle, the preparation, and the provision for this involvement and liaison with Allah (ﷻ). Thus, *ṣalāh* was indispensable even when blood was flowing and armaments were glowing.

Another often overlooked aspect of this lesson is that despite the worldly odds ostensibly favoring the enemy, Muslims under arms have a high morale. They know their enemy is significant in the level of firepower available, that he is more adept than they are at psychological warfare, and that he is equipped with superior espionage and “intelligence” gadgets. But what they know to be significantly better than all that, and what counts in the end, are Allah's (ﷻ) words, “**In fact, Allah has prepared for all deniers of Him a degrading affliction.**”

The following *āyah*, along with how it was demonstrated by the Prophet (ﷺ), delivers instructions on how *ṣalāh al-khawf* (*ṣalāh* required in times of danger) is to be performed,

**Thus, when you [O Muhammad] are among the combat Muslims and about to lead them in *ṣalāh*, let [only] a contingent of them stand up with you, retaining their weapons. Then, after they have finished their *ṣalāh*, let them provide you cover while another contingent,**

who have not yet prayed, shall come forward and pray with you, being on full alert against danger and in retention of their weapons... (4:102).

Thus, the Prophet (ﷺ) led the *ṣalāh* with one military unit praying the first *rak'ah* behind him while they were guarded by another detail of forces. When the praying military unit finished the first *rak'ah*, it took up defensive positions while the others who had not prayed yet joined the Prophet (ﷺ) as he prayed his second *rak'ah* (their first). After the second *rak'ah* the Prophet (ﷺ) ended the *ṣalāh*, in which the aggregate number of *rak'ahs* was two. In a similar situation today, when the danger level subsides or ceases, the two military units, each separately, may pray the remaining *rak'ah*, which they missed, as a makeup *rak'ah* (*qaḍā'an*). The imam who is the commander-in-chief never breaks the combination of these two positions (meaning he should always pray both *rak'ahs* together).

What starts off as a relaxation of ritual meticulousness in favor of military readiness in exceptional times of duress ends with a continued emphasis on progressive societal preparedness for potential intimidation in the future,

**Have them [the combat Muslims] on high alert and armed. The deniers of Allah would love to see you oblivious of your weapons and equipment so that they may launch a conclusive attack on you. But it shall not be wrong for you to lay down your arms [while you pray] if you are troubled by rain or if you are ill; but [always] be fully prepared against danger. Verily, Allah has readied shameful suffering for all who deny Allah! (4:102).**

This enemy attitude is as true at the war front as it is in public life; they would love to see the Muslims detached from their weapons, unconcerned with a military industry, and disarmed throughout life. There are intervals in life when Muslims may not have to bear arms or carry weapons. Climate conditions, failing health, or even

temporary social reversals may dictate that, but the general rule is for Muslims to be on military alert, to be familiar with weapons, and to have their own military industry.

The danger of subversion of the Islamic state and society by *kufir* is ever-present; one of the benefits of *ṣalāh* is that constant communion with Allah (ﷻ) alerts the committed Muslim to the level of danger out there by virtue of his improving understanding of how things work. Sustained communication with Allah (ﷻ) through *ṣalāh* wards off enemy sedition,

**And when you have completed your *ṣalāh*, be conscious of Allah — at [military] attention, at [military] ease, and in [military] coordination; and when you are once again safe, abide by your full *ṣalāh*. Of a certainty, for all committed Muslims *ṣalāh* is, without doubt, a sacred duty linked to fixed times [of day] (4:103).**

These *āyāt* should shake the punctiliousness with which many Muslims attend to their rituals. They are as practical as life itself. The instructions therein should be enough for the Muslims to reevaluate the automatic, the habitual, the mechanical, and the mindless way they render their *ṣalāh*. In our time, there are leaders of *ṣalāh* who will not step into a war front; similarly there are military generals who will not step into a *masjid* to lead a *ṣalāh*. This dichotomy, which is relevant to a church-versus-state type of Islam, has to end; and the understanding of these *āyāt* has to begin.

*Ṣalāh* is a time sensitive duty. The *āyah* above says as much, “**Certainly, *ṣalāh* is an assignment [to be discharged] at fixed times of the day.**” According to the Zāhirī interpretation of this *āyah*, a missed *ṣalāh* cannot be performed at a later time.<sup>497</sup> Their understanding of this *āyah* says that a *ṣalāh* has to be rendered within its time scope, and once that is gone, it can never be rendered again. Therefore, even though the consensus of other scholars recognizes a makeup *ṣalāh* for a missed or neglected one, the Zāhirīs do not make any allowance for a makeup *ṣalāh*. More generally, the sooner a required *ṣalāh* is performed within its time frame, the bet-

ter; conversely, the later it is performed, the more unsuitable it becomes for its performer.

This whole lesson comes to a close by encouraging the Muslims to struggle even though they may have to suffer some pain, some difficulties, and some exhaustion. The hearts of men are moved by Allah's (ﷻ) words in the Qur'an,

**And do not lose momentum while you are in pursuit of the [enemy] horde. If you experience pain, they [the enemy] too experience pain as you do. And you make a request upon Allah and they cannot... (4:104).**

Here, the *āyah* provides a contrast of the two military forces. The combat Muslims endure pain and suffering in the course of the war but they know they are not alone — their enemies also experience pain, agony, and torment. There is, however, a significant difference between the two conflicting sides: the fighting Muslims are on their way to Allah (ﷻ) and they anticipate His beneficence, but the combat *kāfirs* are lost, in disarray, and have no solid step into the future. They have nothing to expect from Allah (ﷻ) as they have never been attuned to Him.

If these *kāfirs* insist on settling differences at the war front, the Muslims should be more keen to go there and put things in order. If the *kāfirs* can put up with some pain, the committed Muslims should be able to put up with more pain. And if a war finally does take place, then the committed Muslims should take it all the way to its conclusive end, until the *kāfirs* have no more stomach for a war, until they have run out of “logic” for it, and until they no longer have the power to wreak havoc on Muslim public opinion by flashing their “military might” and “superpower” position in the world.

There will be times when enervation seems to outflank energy, and when pain seems to be more than anyone can bear, but it is in times like these that combatant Muslims turn to Allah (ﷻ) for provisions. This has been demonstrated every time the committed Muslims lived the details of this Qur'an. They cannot abandon these words of salvation and direction, and then blame Allah (ﷻ)

for defeat when they, to begin with, were not observant of His instructions and counsel.

In a healthy society, there are personal, familial, social, and economic issues that are associated with a parallel set of responsibilities — and this is also the case with Islam. Important values and principles that come from a Qur’anic and prophetic reference point frame these lifetime pursuits. But when these responsibilities interfere with the orders of Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ), inasmuch as the Muslims are duty-bound to carry their share of jihad when the larger body of Muslims is under imminent threat, then the priority becomes to set aside all these other personal issues and responsibilities in favor of preparing for jihad. Today, we Muslims are living at a time when there is an organized and globalized effort, which spans all institutions, to deflate and denounce jihad. At a moment in history when the *kāfirs* are giving it all they have to weaken and undermine this jihad, we, the committed Muslims, ought to be able to find strength for our military resistance to oppression and occupation by referring to some *āyāt* that underscore the centrality of jihad,

Say, “If your fathers and your sons and your brothers and your spouses and your clans and generated financial profits, and commerce you fear may decline, and comfortable dwellings — if all these are more preferable to you than Allah and His Messenger and a jihad on His course, then hold off until Allah comes with His command; and Allah does not guide degenerate people (9:24).

Allah (ﷻ) has compared the *mujāhids* with the *non-mujāhids*,

And Allah has given priority to the *mujāhids* over the sluggish [Muslims] by a tremendous reinforcement, distinction and status from Allah, and amnesty, and mercy, and Allah has always been forgiving and compassionate (4:95–96).



Even for those who are looking for a profit, jihad is a profitable transaction for the *mujāhids*. Their sins are forgiven, whatever suffering they may have deserved is canceled, paradise is open for them, and sooner or later victory will occur. And who is more true to His word than Allah (ﷻ),

O you who are committed to Allah! Shall I show you a trade that will deliver you from a painful suffering? You commit to Allah and His Messenger and you struggle on a course to Allah with your wealth and with your lives. That is best for you if only you knew. He will efface your sins and have you enter gardens with rivers running beneath and comfortable dwellings in a paradise of bliss; that is success supreme. And another [thing] that you adore: victory from Allah and a near conquest; and give the committed Muslims the good news (61:10–13).

Finally the Qur'an says that the time spent by the *mujāhids* as they prepare and go to war is the most blessed time of their lives. Everything they do there and then is magnified and multiplied on their registrar on the Day of Judgment,

...for, whenever they suffer from thirst or weariness or hunger in Allah's cause, and whenever they take any step that confounds those who deny Allah, and whenever there comes to them from the enemy whatever may be destined for them — [whenever anything thereof comes to pass], a good deed is recorded in their favor. Verily, Allah does not fail to requite the doers of good! And whenever they spend anything [for the sake of Allah], be it little or much, and whenever they move on earth [in Allah's cause], it is recorded in their favor, and Allah will grant them the best reward for all that they have been doing (9:120–121).

## No Favoritism or Expediency in Adjudicating Justice

- (4:105) Behold, We have bestowed upon you from on high this divine Writ, setting forth the truth, so that you may judge between people in accordance with what Allah has taught you. Hence, do not contend with those who are false to their trust,
- (4:106) But pray to Allah to forgive [them]; behold, Allah is indeed much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace.
- (4:107) Yet do not argue on behalf of those who are false to their own selves: verily, Allah does not love those who betray their trust and persist in sinful ways.
- (4:108) They would conceal their doings from men; but from Allah they cannot conceal them — for He is with them whenever they devise, in the dark of night, all manner of beliefs which He does not approve. And Allah indeed encompasses [with His presence] whatever they do.
- (4:109) Oh, you might well argue on their behalf in the life of this world: but who will argue on their behalf with Allah on the Day of Resurrection, or who will be their defender?
- (4:110) Yet he who does evil or [otherwise] sins against himself, and thereafter prays for Allah to forgive him, shall find Allah much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace:
- (4:111) For he who commits a sin, commits it only to his own hurt; and Allah is indeed all-knowing, wise.
- (4:112) But he who commits a fault or a sin and then throws the blame thereof on an innocent person, burdens himself with the guilt of calumny and [yet another] flagrant sin.
- (4:113) And but for Allah's favor upon you and His grace, some of those [who are false to themselves] would indeed endeavor to lead you astray; yet none but themselves do they lead astray. Nor can they harm you in any way, since Allah has bestowed upon you from on high this divine Writ and [given you] wisdom, and has imparted to you the knowledge of what you did not know. And Allah's favor upon you is tremendous indeed (al-Nisā':105–113).

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَبَكَ اللَّهُ  
 وَلَا تَكُنَ لِلْخَائِبِينَ خَصِيمًا ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَأَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهُ إِيَّاكَ اللَّهُ كَانَ  
 غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَلَا تُجَادِلْ عَنِ الَّذِينَ يَخْتَانُونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ  
 لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ خَوَّانًا أَثِيمًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَلَا  
 يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مَعَهُمْ إِذْ يُبَيِّتُونَ مَا لَا يَرْضَى مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَكَانَ  
 اللَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطًا ﴿١٠٨﴾ هَاتَيْنِ هَتُؤُلَاءِ جَدَلْتُمْ عَنْهُمْ فِي  
 الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَمَنْ يُجَادِلِ اللَّهَ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَمْ مَنْ يَكُونُ  
 عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَيْلًا ﴿١٠٩﴾ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرِ  
 اللَّهُ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١١٠﴾ وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ إِثْمًا فَإِنَّمَا يَكْسِبُ  
 عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١١١﴾ وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ خَطِيئَةً أَوْ إِثْمًا  
 ثُمَّ يَرْمِ بِهِ بَرِيئًا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلَ بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُبِينًا ﴿١١٢﴾ وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ  
 عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَتُهُ هَمَّتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ أَنْ يُضِلُّوكَ وَمَا  
 يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَضُرُّونَكَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ  
 عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُن تَعْلَمُ وَكَانَ

فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا ﴿١١٣﴾

This lesson is one that breaks new ground and baffles the clichéd shenanigans that are quick to accuse Muslims of bigotry, vendettas, and discrimination. If anyone cares to go to the Islamic source and check out what motivates Muslims, then he should contemplate this *āyah*,

**Behold, We have bestowed upon you from on high this divine Writ, setting forth the truth, so that you may judge between people in accordance with what Allah has taught you. Hence, do not contend with those who are false to their trust (4:105).**

This is considered to be one of the leading *āyāt* in foiling favoritism and disarming discrimination. And the Muslims are to be held accountable to the standards found in this Book. Comparable to what is contained in these *āyāt*, there can be no secular statutes or humanly improvised ideologies that are able to penetrate the heart of man, settle in his thoughts, and define his actions in the social sphere with moral responsibility. Indeed, the Muslims should be innocently proud of the fact that they were able to surmount intolerance when this Qur'an was their ultimate and final guiding light.

Putting things into context, these instructive words were communicated to a Muslim society in which the Jewish population was prominent, influential, and outspoken. From their privileged social positions the majority of the Yahūd in Madinah were busy trying to ruin the new Islamic order by word and deed. This Yahūdi prominence is highlighted in this *sūrah*, and in *Sūrahs al-Baqarah*, *Āl 'Imrān*, and *al-Mā'idah*, among others. The effects of Yahūdi sedition and propaganda could have been catastrophic for the nascent Islamic society in Madinah were it not for the clear and insightful perception offered to the maturing Muslims, who were listening very closely to these words of justice from heaven.

This indisputable Qur'an illustrates, on occasion after occasion, how these Yahūd were circulating lies, marching with the *mushriks*, and motivating the *munāfiqs*. The Yahūd were, in effect, the drawing hand and the thinking head when it came to a broad-

spectrum opposition to Islamic organization, Islamic self-determination, and Islamic social implementation. They were skilled in both defamation and character assassination; they used their historical accumulation of awkward knowledge and superficial skills to try to derail the straightforward Muslims by seeking to delegitimize Muhammad (ﷺ) as statesman and decision maker. True to their historical character, they tried to dispute the validity of (the Qur'anic) scripture.

Some of their schemes went into fomenting division among the Muslims on the internal front in Madinah, while others simultaneously worked with unifying the external enemy to “crack” the Muslims from the outside. All of this, mind you, was being done by the Yahūd while the Muslims were “social infants,” while they were still growing into positions of social responsibility, and while they were working hard to erect their own God-defined society. Being people of previous scripture, they could have helped the Muslims on their own scriptural path, but instead, they settled on garnering all the residuals of culture, tradition, customs, and heritage in Arabia to thwart the emerging Islamic momentum. They exploited all the character flaws and potential points of social weakness that had some Muslims attached to their *jāhili* past, their *jāhili* relatives, or their *jāhili* relationships among the *kāfirs*, *munāfiqs*, and all other opponents of Islam.

It was in this time of political tension and social stress that this lesson was imparted to the pliable Muslims. The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) and the assiduous Muslims around him were listening attentively as these *āyāt* exonerated a Jewish man who was erroneously accused of theft. The *āyāt* go on to impeach those Muslims who were guilty of this calumny — a segment of the Anṣār in Madinah. These Anṣār are well-known: they were the support base of the new Islamic society, they were the bloc of people who received Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Makkan companions, and they were the ones who offered him Madinah as home and commonwealth. These Anṣār were, in effect, the backbone of the Islamic consciousness that was headquartered in their hometown. In a sense, they were the ones who were protecting the Prophet (ﷺ)

with life and limb from the alliance of enemies organized by the Yahūd amongst them.

Regardless of the stellar qualities of the Anṣār as a group, as individuals, they still had to outgrow the *jāhiliyah* to which they once belonged before the arrival of the Prophet (ﷺ). Purely and simply, the adjudication of justice cannot be compromised in favor of a certain class or when society tends to be drowned in its mode of “retaliation” against a “clear and present danger” — in this case, the Yahūd. This passage provides a stark example of how justice precedes expediency, how sensitivity bests demagoguery, and how the ability to make a judgment free from discrimination or dishonesty contravenes inequity.

### Justice Sees Neither Darling, Nor Scapegoat

The human arena of this *āyah* is located in an incident pertaining to a number of Anṣārīs including Qatādaḥ ibn al-Nu‘mān, his uncle Rufā‘aḥ, and Bashīr ibn Ubayriq. Both Qatādaḥ and Rufā‘aḥ had taken active roles in some military assignments with Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ), but Bashīr, according to some narratives, was a *munāfiq* who would compose poetry defaming the Prophet’s (ﷺ) companions and attribute that poetry to other Arabians.

The incident began when Bashīr stole a shield (armor) belonging to Rufā‘aḥ, however the thief, Bashīr, was not detected by the shield’s owner. Rufā‘aḥ, who was nonetheless suspicious that a member from the Ubayriq family of the Anṣār had stolen it, went to Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) and formally accused Bashīr even though he had no evidence to sustain his claim, “Bashīr ibn Ubayriq stole my shield.”<sup>498</sup> When Bashīr realized what was unfolding, he sought to cover up his crime by taking the stolen shield and stashing it in the property of Zayd ibn al-Samīn, a Jew. After cooking up his alibi, Bashīr went to his clan and told them what he had done and in whose residential area he had tossed the pilfered item. In a demonstration of the *‘aṣabiyyah* (group solidarity) endemic to *jāhili* Arabia, members of his clan then went to Muhammad (ﷺ) and said,

O Messenger of Allah! Our man is innocent. The person who stole the shield is so-and-so [referring to Zayd ibn al-Samīn]. We have reason to believe that is so. Excuse our man [Bashīr] and make it public. Be [O Muhammad] his advocate; for if you do not, he will suffer.

In championing its own while casting a spurious charge at another, regardless of the truth in the matter, the Ubayriq clan was obviously insinuating that Qatādaḥ ibn al-Nu'mān and his uncle, Rufā'aḥ, had accused a decent Islamic household of theft without evidence and without proof.

When the Prophet (ﷺ) sought out the facts and discovered that the shield was indeed within the residential boundaries of a Jewish man, he went public and exonerated the Anṣārī (Bashīr). Hearing what had just transpired, Qatādaḥ went to Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) and spoke to him about what he felt had (really) happened. Qatādaḥ was challenged by an incredulous Prophet (ﷺ), "*You accuse a decent Islamic family of theft without cogent and reliable evidence?*" Qatādaḥ then related,

"I returned [home] wishing I had not gone to Muhammad (ﷺ) to speak to him about this affair and also wishing I had forfeited some of my possessions rather than experiencing what I did!" My uncle Rufā'aḥ then came and asked me, "Nephew! What have you done?" [And, so] I told him what Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) told me. Then he [Rufā'aḥ] said, "But Allah (ﷻ) is our helper."

These āyāt were revealed in response to this occurrence,

**Behold, We have sent down upon you this divine Script in a manner of truth and justice so that you may judge between people in accordance with what Allah has shown you. Hence, do not contend with those who are false to their trust, and ask Allah for forgiveness: indeed, Allah is oft-forgiving and mercy-prone. And do**

**not argue on behalf of those who are false to their own selves: verily, Allah does not love those who betray their trust and persist in sinful ways (4:105–107).**

In effect, Allah (ﷻ) was counseling His Prophet (ﷺ) to not become an advocate or a defender of Banū Ubayriq, and to reconsider what he had said to Qatādaḥ ibn al-Nu‘mān. When this Qur’anic explanation was revealed, the Prophet (ﷺ) returned the shield to Rufā‘ah. Then Qatādaḥ finally narrated,

When I approached my uncle with his armor (my uncle was old and visually impaired since before becoming a Muslim, and I always regarded my uncle as a shallow Muslim), he said, “I donate it [the armor] for the cause of Allah (ﷻ).” And this made me feel that he was not a shallow Muslim.<sup>499</sup>

When this whole episode was brought into the Qur’anic light of truth and facts, Bashīr outrightly joined the *mushriks*. But the Qur’an continued to trail him with the following words,

**And he who takes issue with the Apostle after having been exposed to the right course [of action] and then follows a path divergent to the committed Muslims, We will have such a person adhere to false superiors and then to suffer the consequences of Hell and its awful fate. Certainly, Allah does not forgive equating others with Him [His authority], and He forgives anything short of [or less than] that to whomever He wills; and whoever equates other [authorities] with Allah has indeed gone deviant in a manifest way (4:115–116).**

This particular case does not describe a simple legal discrepancy that exists outside of or is uninfluenced by a social reality and a set of political circumstances. The Qur’an is nurturing the evolution of a social fabric that has to grow with the principle of justice



and fulfil it when it comes to issues that are mired in political intrigue, in “religious” sensitivities (between Muslims and Jews), and also in *jāhili* prejudices that predate the Islamic authority in Madinah. Justice has to be first and foremost on the minds of those who carry the core and lift the load of this justice-centered scripture — the Qur’an. When the potential undermining of justice is at issue, then there is absolutely no room for a partiality that precludes objective consideration of a matter or situation.

Another purgation along the way to humanizing and socializing this Qur’an is the new social standard that comes with this Qur’an — a social standard that cleanses society of all those human assumptions that harden into prejudicial institutions. Justice, as it is understood here, acknowledges no favoritism, no class, and even no religious affiliation. Justice has to be resistant to personal preferences, group interests, and even established norms when they contradict the truth, the facts, and the evidence. Justice cannot be influenced by courtroom appearances of elites, their representatives, or their legal advocates. Justice cannot be administered by judges who receive their appointments from unprincipled and corrupt rulers or their underlings. Justice has to be independent and has to take its impartial and dispassionate course regardless of all the worldly considerations that try to interfere with this course.

Imagine if something like this were to happen in today’s “civilized” world. There would have been many excuses and opportunistic motivations to take this issue out of the limelight and to give it a different public spin. But here, in this timeless Qur’an, this particular issue had all the cameras and all the focus of public attention on it. If this Qur’an had been written by a philosopher or an ideologue, there would have been an angle that would have taken the “engine” out of the drive for justice. This angle could have been as narrow as to accommodate petty local power considerations or broad enough to cover “international balance of power” arrangements. But when Allah’s (ﷻ) justice, as described here, is on its course, it sees none of these specifics.

The issue has layers of complexity in light of the facts on the ground. The young and inexperienced Muslims who were strug-

gling against all odds to defend their assaulted state and society in Madinah were keenly aware of the Yahūdī hand that was stirring up hostility throughout Arabia against Muhammad (ﷺ), the Qur'an, and Islam. It thus became socially easy and convenient to throw a specious accusation at a "Jew" and, due to the realities of the time and the nature of a state at war, it was thought the allegation would stick. After September 11, 2001 (9/11), the United States of America got swept up in a hysteria and a frenzy that justified the "legal" detention and the official dragnet against Muslims in America, regardless of whether or not they were involved.

But the Islamic legal system at that time in Madinah over 14 centuries ago behaved in a more civilized manner than the USA today. Had the Muslims been in an "American" mode they would have had a greater justification to mistreat or deny due process to the Yahūd because of their long history of opposition to Allah (ﷻ), His Prophets (ﷺ), and scriptures. These self-same Yahūd have been prophesied to be a stone wall of opposition to Allah (ﷻ), Muhammad (ﷺ), and all Muslims in adherence to them until the twilight times of history. Evidence of this claim in the world today needs little exposition or corroboration. Had this Qur'an been a book presented by man for man, the collective character of the Yahūd — carrying with it a denial of truth, an aversion to equity, and a selective interpretation of justice — would have made it easy for the Muslims to throw one individual Jew into the communal Jewish fray. Furthermore, these Yahūd have never demonstrated a single moral ounce's worth of justice directed toward Muslims: past, present, and "future." So, if the committed Qur'anic Muslims were just another "anti-Semitic" bunch, they would have had no problems accusing, prosecuting, and then punishing an individual Jew who could have easily — if that were the case — been guilty by association.

Strictly from a secular justice point of view, another mitigating factor would be the power standing and the high reputation of the accusing party, in this case the Anṣār of Madinah. These were the power base and powerhouse of Allah's Prophet (ﷺ). An incident like this could very well have caused dispute and dissension among the Anṣār if their charge of wrongdoing against a "Yahūdī"

would have been overturned. Imagine the type of public relations havoc the Yahūd could have provoked out of an issue like this: the Anṣār rob the Anṣār (or to put it in Jewish terms, goyim rob goyim) and the Jew is to blame.

This issue, though, is an issue of principle. Before it is one that is related to the Anṣār, the Yahūd, power relations, and power factions, it is an issue of generic as well as universal justice. This Qur'anic generation was tasked with worldly, global, and universal justice and if it could not pass the test of being fair to human beings regardless of their creed, faith, religion, race, or ethnicity it would have been impossible for it to be prepared or qualified to spread generic justice around the planet. This is what distinguishes Islam and the Qur'an from all other secular and philosophical ideologies. Such a declaration is not meant to be a rhetorical or pretentious presentation of scripture; rather the principle and its impartial execution by the Prophet (ﷺ) is meant to be a scripture of practice and a scripture of participation. The early Muslims here were learning, they were self-conscious of their role, and they were working on their human nature to bring it out of its *jāhili* past and deliver it to its heavenly future.

Muslims who claim to be committed to Allah (ﷻ) via this Qur'an and the Prophet (ﷺ) will have to show they are free of some of the social maladies that usually ensnare a people or population. *Scapegoating* is a human deviation from the divine norm.<sup>500</sup> In race and ethnic relations, similar processes often take place: people shift the responsibilities for their misfortunes and frustrations onto other groups, which are usually visibly identifiable minorities, such as blacks, Jews, Asians, Turks, or the like. These groups can be singled out and attributed with blame for all manner of evil, ranging from unemployment to housing scarcity to literally anything else.

In the American setting, which claims to be the most civilized society on earth, Muslims and African Americans have been recent popular scapegoats; they have had to shoulder the blame for almost everything from the economic decline of whole societies to the escalation of crime rates. In this "America" of "civilization," political groups, such as the socialists, and religious denominations, such

as Roman Catholics, have historically been used as convenient scapegoats. It is, of course, no accident that the scapegoated groups are invariably powerless; they can be blamed and picked on precisely because the possibility of their hitting back and resisting the attribution is almost out of the question. The lynching of African Americans and “patriot acting” against Muslims has been routinely carried out with no consciousness of accountability to a higher Authority — something unheard of in the Islamic dispensation.<sup>501</sup> The American secular legal system profiles certain types of people, admits secret evidence into court, freezes due process, exempts political prisoners from their legal rights, excludes Muslims from the Geneva Conventions, and does whatever it wants to do when it is “certain” that the Muslims and African Americans, among other minorities and aggrieved people, do not have the power to fight back with any effectiveness.<sup>502</sup>

One important feature of the scapegoating process is the failure of the group doing the blaming to analyze fully the circumstances producing the apparent misfortunes. Economic decline, for example, may be caused by a complex set of factors, some rather obscure and difficult to comprehend. Yet scapegoating removes the need to analyze; it provides ready-made explanations such as “the blacks caused it” or “the Muslims are the enemy,” which are simple and comprehensive — but nonetheless wrong and parochial.

For scapegoating to work best, there must be an available stereotype, so that the blame can be transferred with a minimum of ambiguity. If people have a fairly well-defined stereotyped conception of Asians as people who work too hard, make too much money, and engage in less-than-orthodox business dealings, then they have a convenient group to scapegoat. On the other hand, if there was a widespread recognition that a great many Asians work in bad conditions for poor wages and live in overcrowded, run-down homes, then this complicates the stereotype and makes the scapegoating more difficult — depending, of course, on what problems Asians are meant to be blamed for. The abiding rule seems to be not to analyze in any depth the group to be scapegoated. The image of the group identified and blamed may be created anew for

the purpose of scapegoating, but, more frequently, it exists as a stereotype in the popular imagination; scapegoating merely adds new dimensions to the image.

Just look at how the scapegoating of Muslims after 9/11 in America, and indeed the world, served as a training exercise for the achievement of political ends by an exclusivist Indian government, the “largest democracy” in the world, as it dealt with its own so-called 9/11, which occurred later in the same year. Because of the negative stereotype borne by the Muslims of India, Mohammad Afzal Guru, a Kashmiri, was not only accused and convicted of being involved in the attack on the parliament building with no accompanying desire to produce evidence, but his state-sponsored murder by hanging was presented as a necessity for the “healing of the nation.” According to the incomparable human rights advocate and ardent justice seeker of India, Arundhati Roy,

Five years ago this week, on December 13, 2001, the Indian parliament was in its winter session. The government was under attack for yet another corruption scandal. At 11:30 in the morning, five armed men in a white Ambassador car fitted out with an improvised explosive device drove through the gates of Parliament House. When they were challenged, they jumped out of the car and opened fire. In the gun battle that followed, all the attackers were killed. Eight security personnel and a gardener were killed too. The dead terrorists, the police said, had enough explosives to blow up the parliament building, and enough ammunition to take on a whole battalion of soldiers. Unlike most terrorists, these five left behind a thick trail of evidence — weapons, mobile phones, phone numbers, ID cards, photographs, packets of dried fruit and even a love letter.

...In its judgment on August 5, 2005, the supreme court admitted that the evidence against Afzal was only circumstantial, and that there was no evidence that he belonged to any terrorist group or organisation. But it

went on to endorse what can only be described as lynch law. "The incident, which resulted in heavy casualties, had shaken the entire nation," it said, "and the collective conscience of the society will only be satisfied if capital punishment is awarded to the offender."

...From the very beginning there was nothing pristine or simple about Afzal's case. His story gives us a glimpse into what life is really like in the Kashmir Valley. It is only in the Noddy Book version we read about in our newspapers that security forces battle militants and innocent Kashmiris are caught in the crossfire. In the adult version, Kashmir is a valley awash with militants, renegades, security forces, double-crossers, informers, spooks, blackmailers, blackmailees, extortionists, spies, both Indian and Pakistani intelligence agencies, human rights activists, NGOs and unimaginable amounts of unaccounted-for money and weapons. There are not always clear lines that demarcate the boundaries between all these things and people; it is not easy to tell who is working for whom.

Truth, in Kashmir, is probably more dangerous than anything else. The deeper you dig, the worse it gets. At the bottom of the pit are the Special Operations Group and Special Task Force (STF), the most ruthless, indisciplined and dreaded elements of the Indian security apparatus in Kashmir, which play a central role in the Afzal story. Unlike the more formal forces, they operate in a twilight zone where policemen, surrendered militants, renegades and common criminals do business. They prey upon the local population, particularly in rural Kashmir. Their primary victims are the thousands of young Kashmiri men who rose up in revolt in the anarchic uprising of the early-1990s and have since surrendered and are trying to live normal lives.

...In documents submitted to the court, Afzal describes how, in the months before the attack on parliament, he was tortured in the camps of the STF... Afzal

has also said that from the time he was arrested up to the time he was charged (a few months), his younger brother Hilal was held in illegal confinement in a police camp in Kashmir. As ransom.

...Today, five years later, a group of lawyers, academics, journalists and writers has published a reader (*December 13th: The Strange Case of the Parliament Attack*, published by Penguin India). It is this body of work that has fractured what, only recently, appeared to be a national consensus interwoven with mass hysteria.

...The essays in the Penguin book raise questions about how Afzal, who never had proper legal representation, can be sentenced to death without having had an opportunity to be heard, without a fair trial. They raise questions about fabricated arrest memos, falsified seizure and recovery memos, procedural flaws, vital evidence that has been tampered with, false telephone records, false testimonies, legal lacunae, material contradictions in the testimonies of police and prosecution witnesses, and the outright lies that were presented in court and published in newspapers. They show how there is hardly a single piece of evidence that stands up to scrutiny.

...These questions, examined cumulatively, point to something far more serious than incompetence. The words that come to mind are complicity, collusion, involvement. There is no need for us to feign shock or shrink from thinking these thoughts and saying them out loud. Governments and their intelligence agencies have a hoary tradition of using strategies such as this to further their own ends. (Look up the burning of the Reichstag and the rise of Nazi power in Germany in 1933; or Operation Gladio, in which European intelligence agencies created acts of terrorism, especially in Italy, in order to discredit militant groups such as the Red Brigades).

...Given the track record of Indian governments (past and present, right, left and centre) it is naive — perhaps

utopian is a better word — to hope that today’s politicians will ever have the courage to institute an inquiry that will, once and for all, uncover the real story. A maintenance dose of pusillanimity is probably encrypted in all governments. But hope has little to do with reason.<sup>503</sup>

Two days before Kashmiris observed “Martyr’s Day” (February 11), and 12 years after he was falsely accused, India executed Mohamad Afzal Guru; he was hanged in India’s notorious Tihar Jail in the early hours of February 9 after an appeal for clemency by his wife to Indian President Parnab Mukherjee was rejected.<sup>504</sup>

This heavenly Qur’an is so justice-focused that it detaches its adherents from all the worldly considerations and selfish inclinations that would impede the straightforward course leading to Allah (ﷻ). Being apprised of the social forces at work during those times is critical to understanding why this lesson centers around a Jew. It cannot be overemphasized that the Yahūd of those days were the velvet glove enemy of the developing Islamic society and the rising Islamic state in Arabia. Fomenting unrest all over the place, these Yahūd had gone ballistic against an Islamic authority and an Islamic leadership grounded in scripture. They were inspiring and inciting the *mushriks* to go to war with the scriptural power of Islam emanating from Madinah. As the foremost ideological manipulators of the *munāfiqs*, it was the Yahūd with all their intrigue, experience, and knowledge who were baiting the Muslims on almost every occasion. All this was taking place at a time when the committed Muslims were struggling to survive, fighting to follow their faith, and dying to defend their *dīn*. Hostilities were coming at defenseless Muslims from all directions and the *āyāt* of the Qur’an made it clear that the Yahūd were orchestrating these fateful events from behind the scenes.

However, Muslims in their commitment to Allah (ﷻ) are not expected to be petty and grudging. This Qur’an wants to take them out of their reactive character and place them on an extensive tract of higher responsibilities so that they feel and act knowing all the while they report only to Allah (ﷻ). Scapegoating violates this



higher responsibility and higher character. Muslims are not the Muslims they are expected to be if they also bend to stereotypes like the others who are not disciplined by scripture.<sup>505</sup>

In the field of race and ethnic relations, a stereotype is often defined as an overgeneralization about the behavior or other characteristics of members of particular groups. Ethnic and racial stereotypes can be positive or negative, although they are more frequently negative. Even ostensibly positive stereotypes can often imply a negative evaluation. Thus, to say that African Americans are predisposed to being musical and have a good sense of rhythm comes close to the more openly negative stereotype that they are childish and happy-go-lucky. Similarly, there is not much difference between saying that Muslims show transnational strengths and accusing them of being global anarchists.

It is, of course, a difficult empirical question to determine when a generalization about a group ceases to be an objective description of reality and becomes a stereotype. At the limit, almost any statement of group differences can be termed stereotypical, unless it is precisely stated in statistical terms and leaves the issue of causality open. Let us take the example of differential rates of violent crimes between racial groups. It is said that African Americans in the United States have conviction rates for crimes of violence that are five to ten times those of whites; they are greatly overrepresented in the prison population; and they also fall disproportionately victim to crimes of violence, frequently committed by other African Americans. An unqualified statement such as “blacks are criminals” or “blacks are prone to violence” would generally be labeled as a stereotype. “Blacks are more violent than whites,” although somewhat qualified, could still be characterized as stereotypical, since the statement implies an intrinsic racial difference in regard to which group is chronically prone to violence.<sup>506</sup>

The more careful formulations above would probably escape the label of stereotype, because, even though they state the existence of statistical differences between racial groups, they leave open the question of causality. For example, the higher conviction rate of African Americans could be due to hidden class differences

rather than to racial differences, or to racial bias in the predominantly white police and courts in arresting and convicting African Americans. Indeed, probably all of these factors are at work in producing the statistical outcome.<sup>507</sup>

The relationship between stereotypes and prejudice is also of interest. Racial and ethnic stereotypes are generally expressions of prejudice against the groups in question, but insofar as they often have a grain of truth, they may also have a measure of statistical validity, and, therefore, be moderately useful guides for defining behavior. Since secular social scientists say they benefit by trying to predict the behavior of others, and since they all have to rely, for simplicity's sake, on rough and ready categories such as age, sex, class, ethnic group, religion, and the like, implicit stereotypes shape the basis of much social life in secular and *jāhili* circles. Such stereotypes do not necessarily reflect deeply ingrained prejudices.

Thus, for example, the conditioned public mind recognizes that violent crime in the United States is statistically correlated not only with race, but also with age, class, sex, time of day, and urban residence. The old lady who walks past a group of young, African American, working-class men, late at night, in a street in Harlem is not necessarily a racial bigot if she feels a twitch of apprehension. She merely applies "pragmatic" formulas for survival. She probably is more at risk in such a situation than say, at a church picnic. That she is aware of the difference is a testimony to her common sense, not to her racism, though she may be a racist. Because of the difficulty of ascertaining the gap between the objective reality and the subjective perception thereof, the concept of stereotype is not a useful scientific tool in the analysis of behavior, nor has it been used much in the last couple of decades.<sup>508</sup>

In this instance of pointing to social misbehavior by the Anṣār toward an individual Jew who was intended to be the unfortunate victim, in the wrong place at the wrong time so to speak, of adverse social blackballing due to stereotypes in Arabian society, the scapegoating of a "goyim-Jewish" community of pre-Islamic Yathrib is something that had to be excised from the formative Islamic society. Even if there was proof and evidence of a Yahūdi

collective effort to deconstruct an Islamic social reality, an individual Jew, who may or may not have anything to do with the larger socio-political reality, still had to be protected by the Islamic sense of right and wrong from becoming an object of scapegoating, stereotyping, and prejudice.<sup>509</sup> Prejudice, in a technical sense, may be negative or positive. In race and ethnic relations, the term usually refers to the negative aspect when a group inherits or generates hostile views about a distinguishable group based on generalizations. These generalizations are invariably derived from inaccurate or incomplete information about the targeted group.

For example, it could be said that a certain group of people is prejudiced against Asians; this means it has been oriented to behaving with some hostility toward Asians. In a human behavior called discrimination, the prejudiced group believes that, with the odd exception, all Asians are pretty much the same. But the general characteristics it attributes to Asians are faulty. This generalization is called stereotyping and means assigning properties to any person in a group regardless of the actual variation among members of the group. In a recent piece of research it was found that many white residents of British housing developments were prejudiced against Asians, believing them all to be, among other things, “unhygienic, crafty, and antiwhite.” The views were not gleaned from valid experiences but from hearsay or secondhand images.<sup>510</sup> Examples of this process are rife throughout history, although the recent anti-Islamic hysteria and phobia have reached unprecedented levels of bigotry, hostility, and aggression. Hundreds of millions of Muslims are swept under a broad and vague definition of terror. Gross generalizations are made about Muslims and are being used as the basis of all manner of atrocities.

In the aftermath of WWII, a large-scale study of prejudice was conducted by Theodor Adorno and his colleagues.<sup>511</sup> Published in 1950, *The Authoritarian Personality* concluded that certain people are prejudiced because their prejudices meet certain needs associated with their personality. Further, those who were highly prejudiced were likely to have authoritarian personalities; they tended to be submissive and obedient to authority and to reject “out-groups”

in a punitive way. They also saw people in dichotomous or binary terms: “either you’re with us or against us.” The upshot of this was that, if prejudice was bound up with a fundamental type of personality, people with this type of personality would be prejudiced not just against one particular “out-group” but against all people and groups who were considered different in some way.

This general and complex form of prejudice was characterized by the researchers as *ethnocentrism*. This ethnocentrism referred to a tendency to regard one’s own group as the standard and all other, different groups as strange and, usually, inferior. One’s own ways of thinking and behaving were seen as normal, the natural way of doing things. The main finding of the research was that there was a strong relationship between this consistently high degree of prejudice against all “out-groups” and a personality with the following features: possession of “conventional values,” intolerance of weakness, rigidity of beliefs and views, tendency to be punitive and suspicious, and respectful of authority to an extreme degree. Hence the “authoritarian personality.”<sup>512</sup>

As is the case with many social scientists who have no scriptural insight as presented here in this Qur’an, Adorno et al. traced the development of this personality complex and prejudice to early childhood experiences in families tending to be harshly disciplinarian. As a child, the possessor of an authoritarian personality would have been insecure, dependent on, fearful of, and unconsciously hostile toward his parents. Growing into adulthood he or she would essentially have a large reservoir of pent-up anger which, because of basic insecurity, would manifest itself in a displaced aggression against powerless groups. At the same time, the individual would remain respectful of and obedient toward those in authority.<sup>513</sup>

Though *The Authoritarian Personality* has become a classic study of the causes of prejudices in Western secular circles, modern psychologists and sociologists have tended to take the emphasis off unconscious childhood conflicts and to lay them on the pressures and influences associated with the social context. In particular, many have pointed to prejudice as a matter of learning: people simply pick up prejudices against groups from those with whom they

identify, such as parents, teachers, or peers. Either way, the individual feels a pressure to conform, and so adjusts his views accordingly. This helps to explain why prejudices seem to pass from one generation to the next. Some have argued that although personality features may account for some prejudice, the greater proportion of it stems from a straightforward conformity to prevalent modes of behavior. So if one grows up in an environment in which all those with Spanish-sounding names are regarded as imbeciles fit only for menial work, then one strongly feels a pressure to align one's own negative prejudices to conform with this generalization.<sup>514</sup>

Other explanations also invoke social factors. For example, scapegoating implicates minority groups in situations that are not of their own making, yet produces high amounts of prejudice against them. A general social decline might lead to a sharp contraction of the job market and a general deterioration in material conditions. The underlying causes of decline may be complex, so people may look for something more immediate and locate it in the form of a minority group. Thus an immigrant or minority group might be made into a scapegoat and negative prejudices against that group can be fomented.<sup>515</sup>

Prejudice to some can be explained as a result of childhood experiences, pressure to conform, or scapegoating. There are many other explanations; it can be approached as an individual or a social phenomenon. But, however it is explained, one must consider it as an important factor in race and ethnic relations. For being aware of another group's presence and holding negative views and beliefs about that group bear a crucially strong influence on how behavior toward that group will be organized and, therefore, on the general pattern of race relations.<sup>516</sup>

The words of this Qur'an penetrate all these social layers of basic cognitive processes and leave no room for traditions, conventions, or deviations to influence the course of justice in society. The Qur'an is not being diplomatic, tactful, or conciliatory when it expresses these words and *āyāt*. Muslims should learn from this *āyah* how much Allah (ﷻ) has entrusted them with the issue of justice on earth. The Anṣār who made it possible for Muhammad (ﷺ) to

have an Islamic state were not going to be permitted by this Book from Allah (ﷺ) to get away with the equivalent of what is now described as racial discrimination. Arabian-centricity has no place in an Islamic society even though it emerged out of an Arabian society. These Muslims who were listening to these *āyāt* the first time around had to know that they were now on a historical and global course that consolidates the Ummah, eradicates racism, and is tasked with the introductions and conclusions of justice — raw justice and only justice.

### Justice Beckons Impartiality Regardless of Social Status

**In fact, We have conferred upon you [O Muhammad] from on high this scriptural Writ in all legitimate manner, so that you may pass judgment between people in accordance with what Allah has taught you. Hence, do not contend with those who are false to their trust, but implore Allah to forgive [them]; in truth, Allah is much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace.**

**And do not argue on behalf of those who are false to their own selves: verily, Allah does not love those who betray their trust and persist in their guilty manners. They seek to conceal their wrongdoing from men while they dismiss Allah [and His presence] — for He is with them whenever they devise, in the dark of night, all manner of expression that He does not approve. And, frankly, Allah encompasses [with His attendance] whatever they do. Here you are arguing on their behalf in the life of this world: but who will argue on their behalf with Allah on the Day of Resurrection, or who will be their proponent? (4:105–109).**

The first sentence in this *āyah* of justice reminds the Prophet (ﷺ) and all those with him that they are in the company of Allah (ﷻ) before they are in the company of men. They gain their authority

from Allah (ﷻ) before they are delegated by society, and they answer to Allah (ﷻ) before they answer to humans. Through this close-knit affinity with Allah (ﷻ) they gain the confidence and the courage to be equitable, just, and fair, thereby gaining the necessary qualifications to manage the affairs of man. This takes them out of the “interests” of society, out of the preferences of classes, and out of the prejudice of race — and places them squarely on the side of the truth, the Scripture, and Allah (ﷻ). In this position, they will not advocate for the share of associates or the group-solidarity concern of any social class that is false to its relationship with Allah (ﷻ). Even the Anṣār, who had to their credit all the moral and financial support they offered Muhammad (ﷺ), were not able to use their social capital to mistreat an individual Jew. The Prophet (ﷺ) especially, per these *āyāt*, should not be a party to those who are on the wrong side of justice,

**In fact [and deed], We have presented you [O Muhammad] from on high with this sacred Writing, by all means of legitimacy, so that you may adjudicate between people with what Allah has shown you. Hence, do not advocate the cause of those who are false [to their trust with Allah] (4:105).**

Those Anṣārīs who planted stolen armor within the turf of a Jew, so as to have him wrongly accused of theft, not only betrayed society, but they also betrayed themselves. They were false to their contract of truth with Allah (ﷻ) and to their binding agreement with the truthful and trusted Muslims around them. They thus incurred the guilt and shame that attach to such a nefarious act. True, stereotyping, prejudice, and social discrimination were part of the pre-Islamic society in Arabia, but when its constituents became Muslims they were expected to part with all of those social vices. And simultaneously, they were required to replace vice with virtue, that is, to enter into a domain of freedom from fanaticism, of autonomy from arrogance, and of immunity from prejudice. They had no moral or legal excuse for committing a crime and then try-

ing to put the onus of that crime on a Jew, even though the scape-goating, the stereotyping, the historical bias, and the traditional discrimination that are typical of *jāhili* societies would likely have indicted the Jew, regardless of his innocence.

After Islam came to Madinah and was voluntarily accepted by its residents, the fact of the matter was that they were no longer part of a *jāhili* society. Now they belonged to an Islamic society — a society that would not, under any circumstances, tolerate such nonsense, **“Certainly, Allah does not love those who are betrayers and sinners thereof.”** Even the Anṣār, who had all merits in their favor because they had offered Muhammad (ﷺ) and the physically dislocated Muslims with him — the Muhājirūn — a home and a homeland, could not avert the watchful eye of Allah (ﷻ) when they tried to accuse an innocent Jew of wrongdoing. Allah (ﷻ) does not like this type of behavior because it is treacherous to the standards and responsibilities of justice. When those who gave Muhammad (ﷺ) a safe haven from persecution and threat of death backpedaled on the principle of justice, these *āyāt* told him not to stand up, even for them.

Some of these Anṣārīs thought they could get away with this “dumping on a Jew” if no one knew about it. What they should have known is that Allah (ﷻ) knew about it, therefore, they could never have gotten away with it, **“And Allah encases and encircles all that they do.”** These tricksters failed the first lesson of *taqwá*: they thought they could get away with a crime if the legal process could not catch up with them, while a conscientious Muslim knows that he is already caught because moral accountability is something no sane person can run away from. The words of the Qur’an continue to demoralize those who try to defend these types of double-dealers,

**Here you are trying to argue their case in this worldly life, but who can argue with Allah about them on the Day of Resurrection? And who can become their legal guardian? (4:109).**



This is quite a contrast to what today's "Islamic" officials are doing. Here, the Qur'an stands up for a blameless Madinan Jew who was accused, falsely, of theft. It tells the highest crust of Islamic society — the Anṣār — that they will not be able to get away with this, and it exposes this whole episode for all to read, hear, and understand until the end of time. By contrast, in today's world a coterie of nationalistic, Zionist Jews have stolen an entire country and there seems to be no standing up for justice when official Arabians, not the Anṣār of Madinah, are supportive of this grand larceny. If the words of this Qur'an were circulating in the minds of Muslims and its meanings were touching their hearts, today's officials in Muslim countries would not be standing on the wrong side of justice when the Holy Land (not some simple armor) has been shoplifted.

### The Deity of Mercy Makes It Available without Preconditions

**And he who does evil or [otherwise] sins against himself, and thereafter prays for Allah to forgive him, shall find Allah much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace: for he who commits a sin, commits it only to his own hurt; and Allah is indeed all-knowing, wise. But he who commits a fault or a sin and then throws the blame thereof on an innocent person burdens himself with the guilt of calumny and [yet another] flagrant sin (4:110–112).**

These words of wisdom demonstrate that if a crime of this magnitude is committed and the "criminal" himself wants to repent, ask for forgiveness, and truly atone for such a deed, then the door to Allah (ﷻ) is wide open, **"And he who does evil or [otherwise] does injustice to himself, and thereafter beseeches Allah to forgive him, shall find Allah very much forgiving, gracious."** Acts of human moral failure, even when they have social repercussions, are a cause for men to beg Allah (ﷻ) for amnesty and forgiveness. Allah (ﷻ) has opened this door for all human beings who fail in

their commitment to Him, and hence there should be no power on earth to shut this door on a God-seeking guilty conscience.

When a person realizes that he did injustice to himself and to others — as was the case with individuals belonging to the Anṣār who thought they would be able to use all the social stigma against the Yahūd to get away with false accusations against an otherwise innocent Jew — and then decides to return to his moral self, his conscience, and his relationship with Allah (ﷻ), then all means of repentance are available to him. Allah (ﷻ) is the deity of mercy and the authority on amnesty, and He is unobstructed and open-handed when it comes to humans who want Him with all their hearts and souls. Other than the guilty approaching Him with sincerity, faith, and trust, vowing not to fail Him again, there are no preconditions to His amnesty,

**For he who commits a sin, commits it only to his own hurt; and Allah is indeed all-knowing, wise. But he who commits a fault or a sin and then throws the blame thereof on an innocent person, burdens himself with the guilt of calumny and [yet another] flagrant sin. And but for Allah's favor upon you and His grace, some of those [who are false to themselves] would indeed endeavor to lead you astray; yet none but themselves do they lead astray. Nor can they harm you in any way, since Allah has conferred upon you from on high this Scripture and [given you] wisdom, and has imparted to you the knowledge of what you did not know. And Allah's favor upon you is enormous indeed (4:111–113).**

Definitions of guilt refer to both the fact of committing a wrongful deed and the feeling that results from the awareness of committing such a deed. The two meanings are interlinked and are not always clearly distinguished even in a serious discussion about guilt among academics. This, it might be thought, is only to be expected, given the fact that one — the feeling — follows more or less naturally from the other. In practice, however, the apparent

existence of one without the other is possible. Much of this can be explained through an examination of the concepts of *legal guilt* and *neurotic guilt*.

In a world adrift from Allah (ﷻ) there is a sense of legal guilt, which arises when a law is broken, but this type of guilt does not necessarily coincide with moral guilt, because sometimes in the secular world, the breaking of laws is effected through morally right action. In some countries, during certain periods of history, for example, people have been guilty of helping members of minority groups escape persecution despite it being a violation of the country's law. Clearly it would be absurd to attribute moral guilt in such cases merely because an immoral law has been broken.

While the concept of legal guilt is concerned chiefly with the fact of breaking a law, the concept of neurotic guilt centers around the domain of feelings. Feeling guilty would seem to be a normal consequence of wrongdoing, but serious problems can arise when such feelings are not the result of wrongdoing or when their intensity is out of proportion to the gravity of the fault. Many people suffer greatly in this way through the tyranny of the superego — the virtual authority figure within us that results from the internalized commands and taboos of parents and other commanding personages. In childhood we learn that certain kinds of behavior displease our parents and others who look after us. In order not to lose their affection, which is of enormous importance to us, we learn to conform to their wishes, even, eventually, when they are not physically present and transgressions could be effected in secret. Various rules and conventions are absorbed in this way, and a kind of judge is formed within us. This is called by some the *superego*. It is the voice of authority and convention within us; and it can make us suffer, in some cases quite terribly, if we transgress its rules, even if nobody else is aware of what we have done. All this exists in a world that has no conscious contact with the Qur'an.

The development of such a mechanism is useful in childhood as an aid to basic training. Thus people in the secular non-scriptural world learn not to throw vases at the cat, not to wipe food from their hands onto their clothes, and not to use the bed as a toi-

let. Sometimes, however, for a variety of reasons, feelings of rejection experienced during this process and the fear of such rejection can be very great. Moreover, the effects of such conditioning can persist far beyond childhood and into old age. Unfortunately, Christianity is often presented in such a way as to exacerbate the effects of this process. Although mention is usually made of divine mercy and forgiveness by Christian preachers, God, it seems, is often presented as a vengeful judge ready to pounce on any poor unfortunate who happens to step out of line. Fear of punishment by this apparently not-so-loving divinity thus becomes a controlling factor, a tool for bringing about conformity. Such was the case, it would seem, much more in past years than today, but the effects linger on in many who were recipients of that kind of teaching. Sometimes quite amazing manifestations of neurotic guilt are encountered. A person may be convinced, for instance, that he or she alone was responsible for the outbreak of a major war through the commission of some minor fault about which none of the people involved in the war could possibly have known anything. In other cases, there may be quite serious complications such as, for instance, the projection of one's supposed guilt onto other people, who may then become objects of hatred.

The fact of having done something wrong is, of course, an important matter. So too is one's awareness of that fact. No doubt too, a genuine and unexaggerated feeling of remorse that springs from such awareness can be helpful to the process of bringing about an improvement, both internally and externally, in the general moral condition of the person concerned. Indeed, many people might be inclined to view with some alarm the absence of remorse in one who is aware that he did something dreadful. On its own, however, guilt without divine channels and solutions, both as a fact and as a feeling, could well be described as little more than a morbid, negative, destructive occurrence. It is in this regard that a genuine preaching of the Qur'an comes into conflict with the parody of Christianity that is limited to little more than threats of fire and damnation for those who stray from the straight and narrow path. Only a mental and emotional attachment to Allah (ﷻ) can prop-

erly deal with guilt. Forgiveness, mercy, repentance, and atonement are all positive aspects or fruits of being in a state of consciousness of Allah (ﷻ); but guilt, real or imaginary, if left, so to speak, to its own devices, can drag the guilty person only more deeply into the depths of hatred and despair.

Having said all this, the problems that arise from not admitting one's guilt to Allah (ﷻ), to other people, or to oneself need to be acknowledged. This would seem to be a common enough phenomenon, but perhaps it is worth pointing out that there is a very real danger of this occurring in those whose claim to sanctity stems largely from their ascension to the dubious status of being "respectable people." Such "respectability" depends largely upon their uncritical conditioning to the conventions of a privileged group and their apparent inability or unwillingness to understand those — many of whom are not members of the privileged group — who cannot or will not be so conditioned. It is also a very real danger for those people in the so-called First World countries who live off the fat of their own and other people's lands without acknowledging any responsibility for the appalling states of poverty and starvation that exist in the "underdeveloped" countries.

This leads to the thorny subject of *collective guilt*. We may, for instance, feel compassionate toward the poor and the starving, and we may rant and rave against big companies and the governments of rich nations, including our own, because, in our opinion, they are not doing much to help. However, if we are content to live, to some extent at least, off the fruits of exploitation and the immoral sales of armaments, and are not prepared even to consider a drop in the standard of living of at least the most comfortable among us, we are surely deluding ourselves in trying to pin the guilt only on governments and the managers of transnational companies. After all, most democratic governments fear they will lose the next election unless their economic policies are clearly seen to benefit the electorate, or at least a very large percentage of the electorate.

When dealing with the subject of collective guilt, however, the same caution that is applied to individual guilt should be observed. Take, for instance, the all too common tendency to

attribute guilt to succeeding generations of an entire nation for a fault committed against one or more nations in times past, in spite of the fact that many, perhaps most, people in that country regret what was done. Such uncharitable behavior on the part of the accusers clearly does not contribute wholesomely to multi-cultural, transnational, and post-sectarian relations, and can have a destructive effect upon the accusers themselves, who, of course, would do well to recognize their guilt in this regard and change their ways. If, on the other hand, the accused nation benefitted in some material way from the original crime and, even today, people in that country are still reaping those benefits while other nations are still suffering as a result of it, the people who are benefitting should, of course, do what they can to set matters aright. A refusal to do so in such situations might well involve real collective guilt as in the First World-Third World scenario mentioned above.

The secular and God-denying world is afflicted with an indisposing schizophrenia: on the one hand, it suffers at the socio-political level from an awkward break with Allah (ﷻ), while on the other, its scripturally attached folks thrive on shallow pools of information and feelings that are generated by a defective knowledge and perfunctory love of Allah (ﷻ). With this kind of cross purpose, it is often easy for humans growing up in a God-denying psychology and environment to denounce a certain group of persons as responsible for a generally unsatisfactory state of affairs because the behavior of this group is somehow attributable, in a stereotypical and provincial appraisal of the situation, to the decline. Even in these cases, secular derelicts, being detached from Allah (ﷻ), cannot with certainty assign guilt in the strictly moral sense of the word. Without the insight that comes from Allah (ﷻ), and after being socialized for a lifetime to satisfy special interests, there is little recrimination for ascribing blame, especially insofar as media and public relations organizations are concerned, that is not commensurate with the level of responsibility for a certain condition or situation.

Man's social condition is too complex to be simplified by human, instead of divine, criteria. Human appraisals of this condition tend to devolve into binaries. A great deal depends upon a per-

son's knowledge, what is really intended, or what motivates that person, and the degree of freedom he or she enjoys. It occasionally happens, for instance, that, for the best of intentions, people perform acts that are objectively wrong, morally speaking, but that they sincerely believe to be right. Some who indulge in anti-ecumenical activity, such as rejecting the Church's position on homosexuality or abortion, might be sighted as possible candidates in this regard. Something similar may be said with regard to activity that is objectively right, morally speaking, but that is performed for a counterfeit intention, for example, a man giving alms to a beggar, but doing so only for vainglory.

The *āyah* above states it succinctly: each person carries his own weight of sins, wrongdoing, and faulty behavior. There are no inherited sins in a human's dutiful relationship with Allah (ﷻ). Islam differs drastically with Church teachings on this issue. There also is no Church type of confession associated with guilt; a guilty person assuages his failure of conscience by an atonement he himself satisfies. All of these details are embedded in this Scripture of care and love that offers a person the freedom and opportunity to channel guilt into a constructive and productive outcome. No one is going to be held accountable for what someone else has done. This is divine justice, **“But he who commits a fault or a sin and then throws the blame thereof on an innocent person, burdens himself with the guilt of calumny and [yet another] flagrant sin.”**

This is the Qur'an that, in our time, has become the object of all types of accusations. This *āyah* came to teach the early Muslims not to tinker with the principle of justice. It acquitted a Jew and exposed “committed Muslims.” It put people into the context of the Qur'an and the perspective of the Sunnah, rather than allowing people to judge Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) by the benchmark of their own behavior. True, the Yahūd were busy at the time conspiring against an Islamic state and society, and true also, the Anṣār were at the time the backbone and the champions of this Islamic society. But with the delicate issues of justice involved and when two blocs of people are on a confrontation course, there may be individuals within these two camps who are the exception to their

affiliation. In this instance, the *āyāt* of the Qur'an are alluding to guilty Muslims and an innocent Jew — and this attempt by Muslims to scapegoat a blameless person is registered for all times to come. This, indeed, is the essence of civilization. The Qur'an defends a Jew when he is innocent, while it excoriates Muslims when they are guilty.

To put things into perspective, it could be said, without any exaggeration, that in the dynamics of the Madinan Islamic society around the Prophet (ﷺ), there was a sense of “national threat” and “national emergency” — much like what happened in the USA after 9/11. However, the Qur'an, Allah (ﷻ), and His Prophet (ﷺ) made it very clear that justice shall remain above all other considerations. And, thus for the integrity of subsequent human social contact, in the heat of national hysteria, no one may tamper with another's innocence if he comes from a “suspected” group of people, such as, for example, the Yahūd.

The United States, though, claims to separate all governance from divine scripture, including the Qur'an. In the maniacal and neurotic climate of 9/11, the US Justice Department ordered the detention of hundreds if not thousands of “suspects”: Arabs, South Asians, and for all practical purposes, Muslims, holding them without charge or access to lawyers for months on end. Many remained in prison much longer, according to a 2003 report by the Justice Department's Inspector General.<sup>517</sup> Muslim men were rounded up and prevented from their right of legal counsel. Hundreds, if not thousands, of Muslim immigrants were treated with all the necessary background noise of stereotypes, scapegoating, prejudice, racial discrimination, and guilt by association. The unreal public attitude turned law-abiding Muslims into individuals who were presumed guilty, having to prove their innocence. The USA PATRIOT Act was crafted. Signed into law just weeks after the 9/11 affair, the legislation expanded law enforcement's power to conduct secret surveillance and searches in the name of thwarting terrorism.

Nor should this be viewed as a one-time slip by the secular divines. In societies disconnected from Allah (ﷻ), their leaders may do whatever their breakaway conscience dictates. In American



legal history, in wartime, the courts grant considerable leeway to the executive branch. So Abraham Lincoln suspended habeas corpus during the US Civil War and the Franklin Delano Roosevelt administration herded Japanese Americans into camps during WWII.<sup>518</sup> Muslims cannot suspend the Qur'an, declare a "national emergency," violate the principles of justice, and then do whatever they want to others who are "suspect." In Islamic history there are no concentration camps, internment camps, and rounding-up of "suspects" by the thousands on a flimsy excuse that declares them to be "potential enemies."

Throughout this entire lesson, Allah (ﷻ) reminds the Muslims about His abiding mercy and care. He was the one who divulged to His Prophet (ﷺ) the plot to implicate an innocent human being, even though the accused belonged to a crowd of people who were known to be working night and day against Muhammad (ﷺ), the Islamic authority, and an organized and disciplined Islamic society. Allah (ﷻ) uncovered a design that came from within the Islamic society itself and, by doing so, arrested the whole process before there was a miscarriage of justice. Here, the Muslims are apprized of the fact that there are people inside an Islamic society who may not honor their trust, live up to their Islamic character, and devise wicked plans against others,

**And but for Allah's favor upon you and His grace, some of those [who are false to themselves] would indeed endeavor to lead you wayward; yet none but themselves do they lead wayward. Nor can they harm you [O Muhammad] in any way, since Allah has conferred upon you from on high this Scripture and [given you] wisdom, and has imparted to you the knowledge of what you did not know. And Allah's favor upon you is immense indeed (4:113).**

This is yet another incident in which individuals tried to mislead Allah's Prophet (ﷺ); and had it not been for Allah's (ﷻ) concern and care, the Prophet (ﷺ) would have fallen victim to this

deviation coming from within the Islamic community — the Anṣār. Justice is justice and the truth is the truth. No amount of internal “Islamic” temptation or external “Yahūdī” provocation should deter a Qur’anic character from justice, fair-mindedness, and impartiality. The Prophet (ﷺ) himself was endangered with this type of attitude, when people wanted to dodge the prosecution of justice for reasons pertaining to a “mob mentality” or the tune of traditions. But, these *āyāt* show that those who are with Allah (ﷻ) will find that Allah (ﷻ) is with them. Here, Allah (ﷻ) protected Muhammad (ﷺ) when some Muslims tried to pull a fast one. They accused an innocent Jew, thinking they would be able to convince the Prophet (ﷺ) just because the social climate was against the Yahūd or because the social climate was with the Anṣār,

**...Allah has conferred upon you [O Muhammad] from on high this divine Script and [given you] wisdom, and has imparted to you the knowledge of what you did not know. And Allah’s favor upon you is ample indeed (4:105).**

This is an *ummaḥ* of justice concerned with the issue of justice as preserved by a Book of justice that comes from the Sustainer of justice. It acquits an individual Jew by exposing the misdeed, or even the crime, of a few Muslims who wanted to get Muhammad (ﷺ) involved on the wrong side of justice. With all the guilt that is associated with the leadership of the Yahūd, and with all the solidarity that these Yahūd express among themselves, none of that can be extended to victimize an innocent Jew. This Qur’an protected an inoffensive Jew when the Yahūdī decision makers around him were as offensive as anyone can be against Allah (ﷻ), His Prophet (ﷺ), and the committed Muslims. If only people would read and understand this Qur’an they would be cautious before they attack and assail it — as many elites and powermongers are doing today.

This whole lesson should raise the awareness of committed Muslims to the social issues around. It should also make Muslims sensitive to the possibility of there being among them individuals

who will try to ride the social current to their own favor even if that violates the principles and standards of justice. This lesson also carries within it a definition of conscientious Muslims. This definition places them on the side of justice and makes them blind to all other social and personal currents that may be active in a particular context at a particular time. Muslims should emerge from this living lesson with a fixation on a justice free of a preconceived opinion, and free of a predisposition to decide a cause or an issue in a certain way, which does not leave the mind perfectly open to conviction. The Prophet (ﷺ) as judge, per this *āyah*, cannot be in a mental condition that sways judgment and renders the judge unable to exercise his functions impartially in a particular case (the Anṣārīs versus the Jew). The bias that is addressed by this *āyah*, and which is used in legal circles regarding disqualification of a judge, refers to a mental attitude or predisposition of the judge toward a party to the litigation, and not to any views that he may entertain regarding the subject matter involved. This can also be extended to jurors deliberating on a verdict: actual bias consists in the existence of a state of mind on the part of the juror that disables him from considering the issues impartially and without prejudice to the substantial rights of the parties involved in the trial. In the exercise of its own sound discretion, the court would have to recuse a biased juror.

Finally, as a mental rejoinder, there are words in the Qur'an that should be understood in context. Some of these words are conveniently and inaccurately translated to give the same meaning — a meaning that does not capture their subtle or fine inferences. In the context of these *āyāt*, the word *ithm* is used. In its root meaning, *ithm* refers to human activity that delays or retards Allah's (ﷻ) approval and payoff, and so it does not technically translate into the English word *sin*. The word is further developed when it is used in another *āyah* referring to *intoxication* and *gambling*, “*Yas'alūnaka 'an al-khamri wa-al-maysiri; qul fīhimā ithmun kabīr: They will ask you about intoxicants and gambling; say, 'In both, there is considerable ithm...'*” (2:219). The other word that gets scrambled with *ithm* in the imprecise mind is *khaṭ'ah*, which refers to an act that is contrary to “correct action.” It is constructed in a linguistic meter to

indicate that the deviant action is institutionalized or, at least, so well established as to become a behavioral pattern in a person's life. Muslims with knowledge of the Arabic language distinguish *ithm* from *khaṭī'ah*: the former refers to a mental and intentional behavioral fault while the latter refers to a subliminal or non-intentional behavioral fault. Going yet further, the word *buhṭān*, which simply means *falsification*, is another lexical casualty that gets confused in this general lumping together of fine Qur'anic meanings. This falsification, though, is of a light-handed nature that renders the affected person confused and somewhat bewildered.

### ***Shirk* Cannot Be Dressed Up to Prevent God's Justice**

- (4:114) No good comes, as a rule, out of their secret confabulations — saving such as are devoted to financial justice, or equitable dealings, or setting a correct social course among people: and to him who does this out of longing for Allah's goodly acceptance We shall in time grant a mighty reward.
- (4:115) But as for him who, after guidance has been vouchsafed to him, cuts himself off from the Apostle and follows a path other than that of the committed Muslims, him shall We leave to that which he himself has chosen, and shall cause him to endure Hell: and how evil a journey's end!
- (4:116) Verily, Allah does not forgive the ascribing of divine authority to anyone beside Him, although He forgives any lesser sin to whomever He wills: for those who ascribe divinity to any beside Allah have indeed gone far astray.
- (4:117) In His stead, they invoke only lifeless symbols, thus invoking none but a rebellious Satan,
- (4:118) Whom Allah has rejected for having said, "Verily, of your servants I shall most certainly take my due share,
- (4:119) And shall lead them astray, and fill them with vain desires; and I shall command them — and they will cut off the ears of cattle [in idolatrous sacrifice]; and I shall com-

لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّن نَّجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ  
إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ  
نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١١٤﴾ وَمَن يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِن بَعْدِ مَا بُيِّنَ لَهُ  
الهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ ۗ جَهَنَّمَ  
وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿١١٥﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ  
ذَلِكَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَمَن يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿١١٦﴾ إِن  
يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ ۗ إِلَّا إِنثًا وَإِن يَدْعُونَ إِلَّا شَيْطَانًا مَّرِيدًا  
﴿١١٧﴾ لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَقَالَ لَأَتَّخِذَنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا ﴿١١٨﴾  
وَلَا ضَلَّاهُمْ وَلَا ضَلَّاهُمْ وَلَا مَنِينَهُمْ وَلَا مَرْنَهُمْ فَلْيَبْتَكَنَّ ۗ إِذَا نَكَرُوا  
وَلَا مَرْمَهُمْ فَلْيَغْيِرُنَّ خَلْقَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَن يَتَّخِذِ الشَّيْطَانَ وَلِيًّا مِّن  
دُونِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ خَسِرَ خُسْرَانًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١١٩﴾ يَعِدُهُمْ  
وَيُمْنِيهِمْ ۗ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا ﴿١٢٠﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ مَا  
وَأَنَّهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَلَا يَحْدُونَ عَنْهَا مَحِيصًا ﴿١٢١﴾ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا  
الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ  
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ حَقًّا وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ قِيلًا ﴿١٢٢﴾

لَيْسَ بِأَمَانِيكُمْ وَلَا أَمَانِي أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا يُجْزَ  
 بِهِ، وَلَا يَجِدْ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ  
 مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ  
 الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا ﴿١٢٤﴾ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ دِينًا مِمَّنْ أَسْلَمَ  
 وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ وَاتَّبَعَ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَاتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ  
 إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ  
 اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطًا ﴿١٢٦﴾

mand them — and they will corrupt Allah’s creation!” But all who take Satan rather than Allah for their master do indeed, most clearly, lose all.

- (4:120) He holds out promises to them, and fills them with vain desires, yet whatever Satan promises them is but meant to delude the mind.
- (4:121) Such as these have Hell for their goal: and they shall find no way to escape therefrom.
- (4:122) Yet those who commit [to Allah] and do righteous deeds We shall bring into gardens through which running waters flow, therein to abide beyond the count of time: this is, in truth, Allah’s promise — and whose word could be truer than Allah’s?
- (4:123) It may not accord with your wishful thinking, nor with the wishful thinking of the followers of earlier revelation, [that] he who does evil shall be requited for it, and

shall find none to protect him from Allah, and none to bring him support,

- (4:124) Whereas anyone — be it man or woman — who does [whatever he can] of good deeds and is a committed Muslim withal, shall enter Paradise, and shall not be wronged by as much as [would fill] the groove of a date-stone.
- (4:125) And who could be of better *dīn* than he who cedes his whole being to Allah and is a doer of good withal, and follows the *millaḥ* of Ibrāhīm, who was independent [of all false powers] — seeing that Allah exalted Ibrāhīm with His love?
- (4:126) For, to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth; and, indeed, Allah encompasses everything (al-Nisā':114–126).

This lesson builds on the previous ones and is a continuation of the events that have unfolded. The Jew, a legal “citizen” of Madinah, was declared “not guilty” of the specific offense that some erstwhile Muslims tried to pin on him. The course of justice as administered by Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) resulted in a “fellow Muslim” renouncing Islam. Bashīr ibn Ubayriq left the fold of Islam and took an antagonistic position against Muhammad (ﷺ). This fall from Islam into *jāhiliyah* may be expected when devout Qur’anic Muslims are more concerned with obeying Allah (ﷻ) than with retaining ego- or clan-centered “Muslims” in their ranks.

This is the area in which Satan tugs at the exposure and vulnerabilities of *masjid-going* Muslims. In this social, military, legal, and political course of developments, Allah (ﷻ) expresses the eternal Qur’anic fidelity, loyalty, and conformity statement, “**Verily, Allah does not waive the crime of *shirk*, but He does relinquish any other type of sin...**”

Allah (ﷻ) tells the committed Muslims that nothing productive comes out of secret dialogues, especially those which facilitate conspiracy and collusion, as was the case above when some Muslims colluded to implicate a Jew for something he did not do. But there is an exception to this rule, and so Allah (ﷻ) tells those who have dedicated themselves to Him that the only type of confiden-

tial meeting He favors is the one concerned with social, financial, and economic justice among people.

Finally, Allah (ﷻ) explains that people are not to be sized up by their verbal devotion but rather by their labor output, their hard work, and their working together for what is right and resourceful. Muslims, Christians, Jews, and all other people of scripture are to be gauged less by their words and imagination than by their works and profusion. Justice is a matter of things done, right or wrong, and not about words expressed, right or wrong. The world, the universe, and existence itself are contingent on and function according to this truth. If the laws of existence were subject to the wishful thinking and psychotic beliefs of human beings, especially those whose self interest annuls their attention to the rights and needs of others, then there would be chaos on earth and in the heavens. To a large extent, because man has been given a choice in whether or not he commits to Allah's (ﷻ) social law, we can see the destructive impact of his wishful thinking on the malfunction of the world as we know it.

### No Secret Societies in the Islamic Social Fellowship

**No good comes, as a rule, out of their sequestered meetings — saving such as are devoted to financial justice, or equitable dealings, or setting a correct social course among people: and to him who does this out of longing for Allah's goodly acceptance We shall in time grant a supercharged compensation (4:114).**

In this sequence of *āyāt*, the Qur'an places a prohibition on surreptitious meetings (*najwá*). The *āyah* is unequivocal in notifying the Prophet (ﷺ) and the committed Muslims around him that there were other Muslims in their ranks who were discussing some issue on their own, away from the Islamic leadership, and for the purpose of executing a confidential plan — a plan that, if executed, would put the larger Islamic body politic in danger. In the open atmos-



phere of the first Islamic society in the first Islamic State in Madinah, the Muslims were educated, encouraged, and entrusted to come to Muhammad (ﷺ) and present their particular proposal or problem. If the issue was of a personal nature, the Muslim individual would try to discuss it in confidence with the Prophet (ﷺ). However, if the issue had to do with the course of social action or a public affair, then the Muslim individual would present it publicly for everyone else there to become involved.

One apparent reason for this kind of public behavior is to prevent the emergence, inside an Islamic society, of coterie and cliques with personal priorities and breakaway tendencies. It may also help to reduce the possibility of Muslims developing their own “internal thoughts” insofar as this mentality of secrecy seeks not to solicit the active participation of the rest of the Muslims in any discussions and deliberations. This prohibition on secretive, select, and private rendezvous contributes to a more solidified Islamic public mind, which is composed of the input of all Muslims, regardless of background or level of education, and represents the open and accessible venue for them to contribute their unique thoughts.

Clandestine conferences are banned by this discourse. In an Islamic social atmosphere, the *masjid* serves as the meeting of minds, the convergence of opinions, the fermenting of feelings, and the determination of strategy. The *masjid* was not intended for non-personal prayers, detached *du'ā's*, or segregated congregations, as is vogue in today's world. Islamic society in the image of this Qur'an is an open society, a forthright society, a trusting society, a faithful society, and a communicative society. All matters of public interest, social issues, and military affairs were brought into the *masjid* — unless they were what is called nowadays “state secrets” or “national security issues,” or what is otherwise referred to as “classified information.”<sup>519</sup> The two areas that are off limits for public discussion in the *masjid* contain matters pertaining to “state secrets” or an “individual's privacy.” In the unsealed and unobstructed Islamic society, only those with “evil” on their minds will take their internal thoughts into clandestine meetings to think of how to implement the covert decisions reached therein. It is not surprising to

find that the most active members of these cloak-and-dagger meetings were the *munāfiqs*.

An Islamic society that arises out of this Qur'an has to be confident enough to bring its concerns into the civic space to be presented to the larger Muslim public mind, with such presentation being supervised by credible and trustworthy Muslims who are qualified to be true public servants when the occasion merits it. In a transparent Islamic society, Muslims come to their hub — the *masjid* — and express their thoughts on social and public issues without legal impediments, free of formality obstructions, and released from any type of psychological hindrance.

The only exceptions countenanced by Allah (ﷻ) to these secluded conclaves are those, **“...that are devoted to financial dispersals, or equitable dealings, or setting a corrective social course among people...”** This may happen in the case of what is called *anonymous charity*, where individuals get together on their own to help another member in society pay his debt, own a home, settle his family, or satisfy any other need that requires a financial contribution from others. Muslims are also allowed to convene privately to put an end to a misunderstanding or dispute between other Muslims. There is no prohibition for such an act of social reconciliation if what facilitates it is the non-public meeting of volunteers and those skilled at resolving conflicts. These types of meetings away from the public eye — for the purpose of helping other people out, helping other people meet their financial obligations, helping other people reconcile with each other, and otherwise helping other people without the social stigma that sometimes may attend such deeds — are not considered to be conspiratorial in nature. They cannot be deemed to exhibit a “breakaway tendency,” and they do not violate the esprit de corps of the *masjid-centered* and authority-conscious Muslims — provided all this is done to please Allah (ﷻ) and to move the Muslims ahead on a course to Allah (ﷻ) **“...and to him who does this out of longing for Allah’s goodly acceptance We shall in time grant a significant recompense.”** These meetings hidden from public awareness, if and when they do legitimately take place, are not meant to boost anyone’s

ego, to raise the status of a clique of people, and to accommodate any type of personal gain. If someone is seeking a reputation by calling such a meeting he does not qualify for the blessings of this type of conclave.

The absence of a bona fide Islamic social order creates a vacuum that is filled by influential *najwās*. The Qur'an takes the committed Muslims into this area of human activity that many people do not want to breach. There are, to be sure, very influential inner circles of people who prefer to remain behind the scenes, anonymous, and underground despite all the power, wealth, and global clout they have. Or perhaps, it could be said that by virtue of their wealth and power, they can remain virtually unnoticed. They have many corresponding channels of influence: international finance, world politics, global agendas, social programs, and occasional unpublished conferences and meetings. This is the concept of *najwá* gone amok and institutional at the same time. Some of their ideas and identities eventually make it into the mainstream such as the New World Order, the Secret Brotherhood, the Bilderbergs, globalization, etc.

The prohibition of *najwá* included in this *āyah* applies to, among others, what is known as Freemasonry — the beliefs and practices of a group of linked national and international organizations open to men over the age of 21, united by a common code of morals and certain traditional “secrets.” Modern Freemasonry began in 18th-century Europe. On the surface of it, Freemasons do much charitable work, but have been criticized, almost since their inception, for their secrecy, their male exclusivity, and their alleged use of influence within and between organizations (for example, the police or local government) to further each other's interests. It is said that they have approximately six million members.

Freemasons apparently “believe” in God, whom they refer to as the “Great Architect of the Universe.” Historical information suggests that Freemasonry is descended from a medieval guild of itinerant masons, which existed in the 14th century, and by the 16th, was admitting men unconnected with the building trade. The term *freemason* may have meant a full member of the guild or one

working in freestone, that is, a mason of the highest class. There were some 25 lodges in 17th-century Scotland, of which 16 were in centers of masonic skills such as stone-masonry. Factual and reliable information about the group, its history, its plans, and its membership is hard to come by, so it is difficult to say how modern Freemasonry became what it is. Nonetheless, it is said that the present order of Free and Accepted Masons originated with the formation in London of the first Grand Lodge, or governing body (1717), and during the 18th century, spread from Britain to the US, continental Europe, and elsewhere. In France and other European countries, Freemasonry assumed a political and anti-clerical character; it has been condemned by the papacy, and in some countries was suppressed by the state.

To get a better handle on the magnitude of the *najwá* described in these *āyāt*, consider the names of the following American presidents who were members of the Masonic *najwá*: Washington, Monroe, Jackson, Polk, Buchanan, Andrew Johnson, Garfield, Taft, Harding, Truman, Ford, and both Teddy and Franklin Roosevelt.<sup>520</sup> Other well-known American Masons include John Hancock, Benjamin Franklin, Paul Revere, Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, Douglas MacArthur, J. Edgar Hoover, and Hubert Humphrey.<sup>521</sup> Belonging to the global club of these Freemasonic *najwá* affiliations are such influential personalities as Winston Churchill, Cecil Rhodes, Horatio Nelson, Duke Arthur Wellington, John Moore, Simon Bolivar, Giuseppe Garibaldi, Franz Joseph Haydn (who provided the melody to *Deutschland uber Alles*), Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Hohann Wolfgang von Goethe, Voltaire (Francois-Marie Arouet), Giuseppe Mazzini, Mikhail Bakunin, Aleksandr Kerensky, Aleksandr Pushkin, Benito Juarez, and Jose de San Martin.<sup>522</sup>

Such are the types of individuals who join secret societies and have their own agendas. They have to hold their meetings in secret because they know that thinking, moral, and justice-centered people will reject their ideas and the plans based upon them. In the God-defined society of Islam there are no such behind-the-scenes fraternities or underground lodges. The *masjid* is where individuals

and societies open up to each other to move their common condition forward with the best possible accommodation of legitimate opinions that are based on the understanding of the Qur'an and the best possible adaptation to the Prophet (ﷺ).

**And whoever, after having ascertaining guidance, breaks away from the Apostle [Muhammad] and goes in a direction not belonging to the committed Muslims — him shall We leave to that which he himself has chosen, and shall cause him to endure Hell: and how evil a journey's end! Candidly, Allah does not forgive equating authorities with Him, although He forgives any lesser sin to whomever He wills: for those who correspond other authorities with Allah are surely [and dangerously] out of line (4:115–116).**

“As for he who contradicts the Apostle...” This literally means anyone (or any group) who opposes and reacts in opposition to Muhammad (ﷺ). It includes everyone in a confrontational mode with Allah's Prophet (ﷺ), and allied to the antithetical forces of the time. In the context of the lesson here, this is a clear reference to all self-directed, on-their-own, and breakaway “subversives” within an Islamic, Qur'anic, and prophetic society. The nature of an Islamic society permits Muslims to externalize their internal thoughts, to present in public their private impressions, and to become active and contributing members in the formulation of decisions, policies, and strategy. Islamic social activities, as they were systematized in that golden era of Islam back in the Prophet's (ﷺ) time, were not restricted to ritualistic religion, passive religion, or secular religion void of any program for all societal endeavors beginning with very local issues and ending with very universal issues. Allah's Apostle (ﷺ) presented people with a full-spectrum *dīn* inclusive of personal rituals and practical regulations.

It is unheard of to say that Islam and the Qur'an are “religious” in the secular, Western, and “Judeo-Christian” sense of the word. In this world of “minimizing” God, the preponderant sense of religion

is usually regarded as a personal relationship to the divine Other, or God. Religious experience in this scripturally alien climate claims to include the whole person, but uppermost is an awareness of the emotions and senses: sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste. Signs made and attitudes assumed express feelings through the senses and heighten experience. The objective is to stir emotions of yearning, guilt, repentance, love, and joy. Reflection on the experience is an intellectual work and helps to form the understanding of who God is and how God acts in relation to the individual and the world.

In a world of “threads and strings” (the secular, anti-scriptural social domain), religious experience has an individual component but is also known through corporate worship and may be strengthened through the awareness of a religious community’s singing, praying, and reenacting rituals. The individual is both strengthened by the group and more closely related to it through shared worship. There is the further possibility of more compelling relationships to other individuals and a “satisfying” integration of the self.

The nature of the relationship sought with the Transcendent varies with the personality of the individual. Some seek a strong authority figure to give reassurance and direction to self. Others seek a flexible figure who invites openness and exploration. Each person hopes for freedom through a different route. Some, more aware of the dark side of life and the self, struggle in their “religious” experience against darkness, separation, and even a sense of temporary abandonment while yet believing that God is present. Others, temperamentally attuned to the sunny side of life, develop an uncomplicated trusting relationship to God with little turmoil.

The sad condition of secular man, even the most religious, is his inability to tie his personal life with the essence of life all around him. He is unable to see how powers and governments are able to become his worldly authorities, his indirect deities, and eventually his gods in a practical sense, leaving him to a remote, abstract, and even mythical “God” who is permitted by these governments to fill the imagination and occupy the fantasies of people. This is the type of sin that cannot be erased from the incontestable register of man’s deeds. It seems that people will break away from

Muhammad (ﷺ) because they cannot abjure the socialization of secularism insofar as human authority in the area of temporal governance is concerned. They find themselves actually feeling burdened with a *dīn* that has one source of authority, one source of self-assurance and confidence, one superior, and one channel of security — Allah (ﷻ).

**And whoever, after having ascertained guidance, contravenes the Apostle and diverges from the path of committed Muslims — him shall We leave to that which he himself has chosen, and shall cause him to endure Hell: and how evil a destiny! (4:115).**

Putting the pieces of this lesson together shows that some of the most serious subversive attempts against the integrity of Islam, the unity of the Qur'an, and the methodology of the Prophet (ﷺ), came from secret societies that were busy hatching plots to ritualize Islam, secularize the Qur'an, and “spiritualize” Muhammad (ﷺ). The *najwā* of these saboteurs is what is condemned here in very frank words. Their direction is also candidly presented: they were moving in the direction of *shirk*. They were on a course that conflicts with the Apostle (ﷺ) and that culminates in the worst crime possible — *shirk*.

### **Devaluing the Meaning of *Shirk* to Justify Illegitimate Rule**

Some people are guilty of *shirk* because they out-and-out believe divinities exist alongside Allah (ﷻ). In their defective minds, these deities have the right and basis to be their source of information and influence. This type of *shirk* may have been prevalent at one time or another during the course of human history and development. It may also have some traces in today's world among primitive or crude communities in less-developed parts of the planet.

All this notwithstanding, the more subtle and sophisticated form of *shirk* occurs when people are guilty of transferring or shifting the authority component of divinity to other, usually more powerful,

human beings. As *shirk* is the most lethal and the only inexcusable crime man can commit, the definition above cannot be reiterated enough. The Qur'an cites those "Jews" and "Christians" who elevated their rabbis and churchmen to positions of competitive authority with God. This is the area that Muslims will have to clarify, first to themselves, and then to the other peoples of the world.

Many Muslims, especially those who have come under the sway of Saudi sponsored terminology, have confused this term very seriously. In the Saudi Arabian vocabulary, *shirk* is centered around graves, saints, and *bid'ahs* (improvising in the ceremonial matters of Islam). The word, the definition, and the implications of *shirk* have suffered so much because they have been cut back and cut down to notions of rituals. As important as this concept is — it is the highest crime and misdemeanor, the cardinal sin — how can the larger body of Muslims permit the Saudi government and its missionary work to curtail it within the area of rituals? And in this way, characterize those who "worship" or show religious devotion to something besides Allah (ﷻ) as guilty of committing *shirk*? A closer Qur'anic consideration of the word demonstrates that the Saudis have been taking all the rest of the Muslims on a ride.

The quintessential meaning of *shirk* is the dislocation in the human mind and heart of Allah's (ﷻ) authority. In the world of "Jewish", "Christian," and "Islamic" religiosity there has been an erosion of Allah's (ﷻ) authority "figure." Authority has been misplaced. Now, in the Muslim context, primarily due to the Saudi slanting of Islam, the designation of *shirk* no longer refers to the consummate element of vanished, squandered, or missing authority. "Jews" and "Christians" are guilty of *shirk* when they raise their religious and political personnel to authoritative positions that compete with or rival Allah's (ﷻ). Likewise and equally so, "Muslims" are guilty of *shirk* when they raise their religious and political officials to authoritative positions that contend with or outflank Allah's (ﷻ). Anytime the most religious "monotheistic" society on earth concedes ultimate authority and the source of authority to anyone or anything besides Allah (ﷻ), it is guilty and unredeemable because of its *shirk*.



That being said, a careful distinction has to be drawn between authority as lawgiving and authority as law-interpretation. Whenever a temporal authority relegates itself as the source of laws, values, principles, concepts, and regulations, then it considers itself to be on par with God, even though in a “religious” sense, it will deny this observation. It is not the prerogative of man to define or describe who God is. And so if God says He is the authority, meaning that He is the only lawgiver, the only higher authority, the only source of what is legal and what is not, then He is the only and ultimate word on the issue. This is, first and foremost, what makes Him a deity and a divinity. To this end there can be no other philosopher, politician, or ideologue who can tell man otherwise. This genesis of authority is Allah (ﷻ) — and Him alone. But once we concede this and accept it with all our hearts and minds, we need our human potential, our human entitlements, and our human reasoning to understand, interpret, and apply this authority to our lives. For this task, Islamic ‘alims and *mujtahids* are needed to interpret and approximate the meanings of divine authority for the larger body of Muslims. This is not, of course, *shirk*. Muslims in their understanding and relationship with ‘alims do not confuse the source of authority with the interpretation of authority; and the ‘alims themselves do not claim such a thing.

What, though, exists today in light of this? There are people who hold preeminent positions and rule over nations, there are persons who hold the office of head of state, there are patricians and princes, there are officials and premiers, there are judges and magistrates, and there are a class of “divines” who, contrary to their denials, are acting like God on earth. Ideological *shirk* has become institutional, legal, and “logical”; in effect, it defines the entire world we live in. Through the liberally financed programs to sabotage the meanings of the Qur’an, many Muslims live in today’s world of striking and salient *shirk* totally oblivious to the fact.

Human beings are conforming beings. Consciously or subconsciously, they want to be accepted and to fit in. Structured *shirk* has socialized the average human being in his everyday life to go along with the way the world is: render unto God what is God’s

(the rituals, prayers, and all that temple activity) and render unto Caesar what is Caesar's (the laws, regulations, and all the norms of civic life). People who conform to this violation of God are *mushriks*. They could be rabbis, priests, and even 'alims themselves. Human beings were ordered to conform to one divine authority. Morality and legality, morals and laws, and manners and behavioral patterns stem, in the world of divine integration (*tawhīd* — the antithesis of *shirk*) — from Allah (ﷻ).

*Shirk* is such an abominable crime that it will not be written off by Allah (ﷻ). Anything else is subject to Allah's (ﷻ) mercy, amnesty, and clemency. Societies are destroyed because their *shirk* has been grounded and institutionalized to a degree that Allah (ﷻ) is thoroughly excluded from their active and decision-making lives. Today, God is virtually nonexistent in parliaments, courts, legislative chambers, government councils, town hall meetings, and all other public assemblies that are responsible for moving individual morality into the public space. It is in this sense, **“...for those who have drawn up comparable authority to Allah have gone irrevocably astray.”** The whole world is swinging between ideologies and legal systems in a way that shows how it is in desperate need of direction. The direction is here; would anyone care to consider it before it is too late?

### How *Shirk* Impacts the Gender Gap and Bioethics

The following *āyāt* are a reflection on the type of societies that sustain *shirk*. One of the consequences of the depletion of morality in human life, as a consequence of misunderstanding and misreading Allah (ﷻ), into a lifestyle of *shirk* is the “gender” issue. Societies that have parted with Allah (ﷻ) begin to feel cozy living in their governmental lodge. For reasons not thoroughly documented in history books, pre-Islamic Arabian society had a streak of “feminism,” which took the form of divine representation, that is, idols. There was also the practice of branding cattle by tearing their ears, as a service for the “divines.” The pulse in the *shirk* world order of that time was to change, mutilate, or physically reengineer what

Allah (ﷻ) had created. All of these acts were incompatible with the nature and essence of Allah's (ﷻ) way or His disposition,

**In His stead, they invoke lifeless symbols [feminine idols], thus invoking none but a mischief-making Satan whom Allah has rejected for having said, “Verily, of Your servants I shall most certainly take my due share, and shall lead them wayward, and fill them with vain desires; and I shall command them — and they will cut off the ears of cattle; and I shall command them — and they will corrupt Allah’s creation!” But all who take Satan rather than Allah for their superior authority do indeed, most clearly, lose all; he [Satan] holds out promises to them, and fills them with vain desires, yet whatever Satan promises them is but meant to delude their minds (4:117–120).**

In pre-Islamic Arabia there was a public sense that the angels were God's daughters. As “social evolution” would have it, in time this notion of the angels being God's daughters was honored by society through the figurative representation of these angels as idols. And these idols were given female names; hence, al-Lāt, al-'Uzzá, and Manāḥ.

It appears that *mushrik* societies, in their progressive deviation from Allah (ﷻ), begin to have a gender problem. This is certainly the case in our world today. The advanced social constructs of *shirk* do not know how to have normal sex or gender relations. It appears from this *āyah* that the pre-Islamic Arabians reached a point in their social “development” where they made up their minds that the angels were God's children, and that these children were feminine. This also seems like a self-reaction to the macho masculine image or the paternalistic preference that societies of *shirk* experience. Satan places these societies of *shirk* with the governments who rule over them in a trance that is justified by man's “scientific” knowledge. This relative knowledge acquired by limited man away from the light of Allah (ﷻ) leads down a destructive

and diabolic course. Satan said as much when he uttered the following words,

**“Verily, of Your servants I shall most certainly take my due share, and shall lead them astray, and fill them with vain desires; and I shall command them — and they will cut off the ears of cattle; and I shall command them — and they will adulterate Allah’s inception [of life and humans]!” (4:119).**

The serious disestablishment of Allah’s (ﷻ) authority in human society renders that society prone to gender injustice. From human cultural, political, and social experience, it is well known that men are inclined to (or conditioned to) oppress women. Human nature being what it is, people begin to develop, in a short period of time, an active belief in equal rights and opportunities for women as a reaction to the previous patriarchal norm. The gender gap that develops in societies of *shirk* can be traced directly to the inequality that comes from breaking away from the equality enshrined in scripture and held sacred in this Qur’an. Western consciousness of gender is a byproduct of power abuse; man abuses power vis-à-vis woman. And so women begin to function within a set of confines defined by and in service to their men; and thus they begin to think of themselves as mothers, daughters, sisters, wives, and lovers in a sexual role. This is the way they are socialized to bring their gender along with them from home to market and back again. At its best, feminist theory reinvents the way people think about power itself, because it factors in the politics of sex. Political assumptions, hitherto, granted men in society the point of reference.

In a world void of Allah (ﷻ) and His caring and loving words, “oppressed women” begin to realize the weight of the political and social order around them and consequently question the “unnatural” differences between male and female. Identifying “male supremacy” points to a human problem when that “supremacy” becomes instrumental in exploiting the female. But the structure of governmental *shirk* is so well constructed that it pushes the

“feminists” to take issue with gender itself, instead of their taking issue with the political, ideological, and religious systems that perpetuate gender inequality. However far Western feminism may want to take its reaction to inequality and oppression by men, it may or may not go to the extent of attributing girls to God as a form of advanced or progressive feminism.

In point of fact, with the pre-Islamic Arabians, this much has occurred before. And in the technocratic world of today, there exists the contemporary version of the same reactionary mentality. Going far over the edge, human suffering can now alleviate its pain by trying to “fix the problem” through transsexual medical procedures or even genetic manipulations. This is the demonic and macabre way of adjusting a wrong. Satan himself said it, “**...and I shall command them — and they will transfigure Allah’s inception [of life].**” Remember, all of this is happening within a climate of social and structural *shirk* — a state in which man marginalizes the authority of Allah (ﷻ) and maximizes the dominance of man. In this displacement of “authorities,” Satan rules. This is the same diabolical force that led our common father Adam (ﷺ) out of paradise. That Allah (ﷻ) has condemned Satan for his animosity and hostility toward the descendants of Adam and his wife (ﷺ) has been established since the time man was created. Man’s gender manipulations, his investigations and research in the animal kingdom, and then his “bioethics” all have the imprint of the chief spirit of evil and the adversary of God.

The wilderness of *shirk* has filled the ego of man with self-glorification. Science, we are told, promises great breakthroughs, innovations, and even miracles. The gender, gentile, and genetic deviations in a world lacking the authority of Allah (ﷻ) have led contemporary thinking heads into a field of applied ethics, developed over the past half century, that deals with the capability to keep terminally ill (or injured) patients alive with elaborate life support systems and to transplant vital organs on the one hand, and the knowledge that makes these activities possible on the other. Since medical science now has this knowledge and capacity, and more, questions naturally arise about the ethical nature of such

activities. Ought we to keep the brain-dead patient alive by respirators? Should we implant the hearts of baboons in infants with malformed hearts? Ought we to tamper with the sex of human embryos? Are we moral if we produce “test tube babies”? These and similar types of questions are the domain of bioethics. Such issues involve basic human values, and the decisions made, even by, or especially by, “experts” affect everyone’s quality of life in society.

In the modernistic and technological world that is void of Allah’s (ﷻ) authoritative guidance, people seek, above all, to be rational, to avoid causing unnecessary evil (prevention of evil), and to apply the same standards to everyone, everywhere, all the time (universality). They generally do not speak about the promotion of good, since, in their judgment, the good of one person may conflict with or contradict another’s conception of one’s own good. Rather, they seek the avoidance of evils, such as discomfort, death, disability, and discrimination.

The ethics that deal with life as Allah (ﷻ) presented it include medical ethics, and in a larger field of concern, these ethics do not exclude considerations about the manipulation of the DNA chain or the possibility of producing genetic “clones” of people. Medical ethics, as an applied ethical area that sooner or later touches everyone’s life, is of great importance and interest to the general public. For example, does switching off a respirator when a patient is “brain-dead” constitute killing? Is refusal to start “heroic” medical measures, which keep the heart of an old, exhausted, “terminal” patient beating, an act of manslaughter?

When ethics lag behind science, there is not as much of a problem as there is a crisis in the human condition. The diminishing morality of everyday ordinary, decent people applied to the critical, and often tragic, situations that can and do arise in hospitals and in experimental laboratories reflects how science itself has not been nurtured by moral humans. A frequently asked question is: we can do this (for example, put an animal’s organ into a human) but ought we to do so? This area of concern, sometimes called the bio-realm of bioethics, is far wider than medical ethics, and much more complex than the usual day-to-day ethical problems involving hon-

esty and respect of another's rights, but nonetheless in a general sense, it is directly related to ordinary ethical values.

With reference to the far-reaching possibilities of medical science — for instance, to correct defects in an unborn child — there comes about the ethical problem of lack of informed consent. While it seems morally unobjectionable to tamper with the fetus so as to prevent it being born crippled, is it equally clear that the scientist has the license to alter the sex or personality of the fetus? Is not such a tactic the manipulation of a human being by the standard of a “good” he or she has not fully understood and freely consented to?

Another area of bioethics involves the rights (if any) of animals. Even before the technology of science expanded to the level seen today, many people have sympathized with the helplessness of animals, but in recent years the issue has become more urgent, perhaps even desperate. Of course, the various physical and medical sciences would not have been capable of making their discoveries without the use of experimental subjects, chiefly rats, dogs, rabbits, and monkeys, but also sheep, horses, pigs, and a wide array of other animals. The concern to protect the environment, the forests, oceans, streams, lakes, and even the sky (that is, phenomena such as acid rain) is also an expanding area of concern in contemporary bioethics.

What drives today's scientific research? Who finances the latest technology? What purposes do investigative science and modern laboratories satisfy? Why does a scientist today become a scientist? Are there any moral answers to these questions, or are the answers materialistic, financial, and profit centered? If it is the latter, then wiser people ought to discern that humanity is moving in the wrong direction. And by learning from previously doomed “civilizations,” humanity today should realize that it is also doomed if it does not take corrective steps and disciplinary measures,

**Whatever Satan promises them is but meant to delude the mind. Such as these have Hell for their goal: and they shall find no way to escape therefrom. Yet those**

who commit [to Allah] and do righteous deeds, We shall bring into gardens through which running waters flow, therein to abide beyond the count of time: this is, in truth, Allah's promise — and whose word could be truer than Allah's? (4:120–122).

Turning the situation around begins with accepting Allah's (ﷻ) unquestionable authority. Those who dismiss it will — through the course of cumulative years and subsequent generations — attest to the state of *shirk* they were in. They will be fed with illusions, mistaken opinions, and erroneous ideas that are surrounded by “scientific facts” and “technological breakthroughs.” In the end, though, their “progress” will all come to naught as all modernities and “civilizations” do, when they part company with Allah (ﷻ) and go in their own materialistic directions.

### Paradise Is Not Earned Simply Through Verbal Affirmations

Some people claim they are superior to others because of their race. Other people say they are better because of their “standard of living.” Still others pride themselves on being the cream of the crop because they are the “elites.” There are also those who have developed an ego and a prejudice toward others because they regard themselves to be “chosen” by God or because they were the original recipients of scripture. And the list of the measures of human self-distinction with a view to play God over others can go on and on. However, all of this rhetoric and arguments about superiority that human beings take pride in stand hollow in front of the one and only true measure of human distinction that Allah (ﷻ) expresses here in this *āyah*,

It may not accord with your wishful thinking, nor with the wishful thinking of the followers of earlier scripture, [that] he who does harm and destruction shall be requited for it, and shall find none to protect him from Allah, and none to bring him support,



whereas anyone — be it man or woman — who does [whatever he can] of good and merit, and yields to Allah withal, shall enter Paradise, and shall not be wronged by as much as [would fill] the groove of a date-stone. And who could be of better *dīn* than he who cedes his whole being to Allah and is a good doer withal, and follows the *millah* of Ibrāhīm, who was independent [of all false powers] — seeing that Allah exalted Ibrāhīm with His love? (4:123–125).

This lesson rebuffs the supremacy complex that comes from Jews and Christians who use their affiliation with God to raise their status with a sense of prejudice, arrogance, and exclusion of the other. In another *āyah*, the Qur'an itself quotes them as saying, "We are Allah's children and His beloved ones..." (5:18). Some of them went as far as to say, "The fire [of Hell] will only touch us for a few days [if at all]!" (3:24). Unlike those Jews who interpret the Bible as saying that God entered into a covenant with Abraham (ﷺ) and his descendants to be God's servants and witnesses in the world, there is a serious streak of racial superiority among other Jews who cling to a prejudicial understanding or interpretation of "God's chosen people." This concept has been distorted through the ages to mean that the Jews regard themselves as God's chosen, that is, superior to other people. The ineffectual Jews who are free of prejudice go on to explain that "chosenness" puts a heavy burden on the Jewish people, rather than endowing them with special privileges. Contrary to the "supremacy" attitude of official Jews who possess more than their share of power, these principled and beleaguered Jews, who are comparatively fewer in number, concede the Hebrew Prophets (ﷺ) making it clear that being chosen does not mean being better than others, but rather having a special mission founded upon a high moral code and an unshakable faith.

Human nature does not change character from one professed adherence of scripture to another. Thus there are "Muslims" who also display the same mentality, considering themselves to be the best nation on earth simply because of some words they utter or

some rituals they perform. They think that Allah (ﷻ) will “look the other way” if they do something wrong (just like some Anṣārīs thought when they tried to scapegoat an innocent Jew)! How can Allah (ﷻ) be uncomfortable with them? Are they not “Muslims”?

This *āyah* came to bring everyone back to basics, and to dispel any notions of preeminence with God. Whether you are a Jew, a Christian, or a Muslim, it is not your religious language, your religious heritage, or your religious sect that defines who you are; rather, it is your dedicated labor, your sincere work, and your pledged effort that counts. All people should be measured by the nature and the type of work they do. When a person yields to Allah (ﷻ) — that is, he becomes a Muslim — the implied extended meaning is that everything he does is a service to Allah (ﷻ). And, due to the nature of adhering to Allah (ﷻ), this human service has to be disciplined, coordinated, and channeled according to the scriptural program that has become the Islamic trust. This effort, independent of human or worldly powers but dependent upon Allah (ﷻ) and the confidence of being with Him, was pioneered by Ibrāhīm (ﷺ), and for that Allah (ﷻ) designated him His convivial (*khalīl*).

People who do wrong things cannot tender their religious rituals as an excuse that exempts them from the consequences thereof. This is how the Qur’an, Allah’s (ﷻ) spoken word, is teaching the Muslims — who are Allah’s (ﷻ) hoped-for illustration of will — to be work oriented, hard work sensitive, and task conscious. The reliable definition of what constitutes good work and what constitutes bad work remains this consummate Qur’an,

**...anyone — be it man or woman — who does [whatever he can] of good deeds and is a committed Muslim withal, shall enter Paradise, and shall not be wronged by as much as [would fill] the groove of a date-stone (4:124).**

The compensation for good work and labor is the same for men and women. The definition for good work is the equally accessible relationship to Allah (ﷻ): a commitment to Him. Neutral

labor cannot be on par with God-conscious labor. Allah (ﷻ) does honor to men who have dedicated their effort to Him. It is this awareness of Allah (ﷻ) during the hours of work that dedicates the final result of that work, whatever good work it is, to Allah (ﷻ). Labor in this scheme of things is not only for generating profits, not only for satisfying employment requirements, not only for bringing home some bread at the end of the day, and not only for the many other definitions and characterizations it has in a godless world. Labor itself becomes a relationship with Allah (ﷻ) when all activities in society are meant to meet the standards and the criterion presented to us in scripture.

It is not easy for people of scripture to read, “**...he who does something wrong will be redressed for it.**” Human nature and human beings are bound to do things wrong. No one is exempt from making mistakes, doing the wrong thing, or committing errors. When one listens to these words of truth from the source of truth, he knows that he is only human and that to some extent he will be avenged for his misdeeds. Human beings cannot trick themselves into making believe that they will not have this living meaning apply to them in the course of their lives. Every human mind should tremble when it hears this *āyah* warning of the impending consequence of doing something wrong. When man lives in the presence of Allah (ﷻ), he knows he cannot dodge the aftermath of his misdeeds and misbehavior. Reading this fresh information sensitizes one to feel that he is experiencing, at this very moment, the outcome of his worldly and errant efforts.

The following account provides a context for the revelation of this *āyah*. During the social construction of Islam in Madinah, there were some Muslims, Jews, and Christians who met in a gathering. The Jews said to the Muslims,

We are better than you are. Our *dīn* precedes yours, our scripture came before yours, and our prophet predated yours. We are the “nation” of Abraham. And no one will enter Paradise unless he is a Jew.

The Christians reiterated a similar statement; and then the Muslims said their piece,

Our scripture came after yours, so did our prophet. You were ordered [by Allah] to “see the light,” to follow, and to abandon your ways. We [in this sense] are better off than you are. We belong to the *dīn* of Ibrāhīm, Ismā’il, and Ishāq (ﷺ). And no one will enter Paradise unless he is included in our *dīn*.

To this type of trialogue, Allah (ﷻ) revealed,

**It may not accord with your wishful thinking, nor with the wishful thinking of the followers of earlier scripture, [that] he who does offensive activity shall be requited for it, and shall find none to protect him from Allah, and none to bring him support... (4:123).**<sup>523</sup>

It is reported that Imam al-Ḥasan said, “*Īmān* [commitment to Allah] is not a matter of wishful thinking. It [*īmān*] is heartfelt and verified by deeds.”<sup>524</sup> He is also reported to have said, “Some people are impressed by [eventual] forgiveness; they parted with the world full of sins. Had they been true [to their commitment to Allah] they would have cultivated [and appreciated] their [worldly] deeds.”<sup>525</sup> Two *āyāt* from one of the shorter *sūrah*s express the same sentiment with a different choice of words, “**And so, he who shall have done an atom’s weight of good shall behold it; and he who shall have done an atom’s weight of evil shall behold it**” (99:7–8).

Another understanding of the *āyah*, “...he who does evil shall be repayed for it, and shall find none to protect him from Allah, and none to bring him support...” is exemplified by the following narrative. Abū Bakr came to Muhammad (ﷺ) after this *āyah* was revealed and asked, “But, then, how are we to be successful, when we are to be avenged for all the improper or immoral acts that we do?” The Prophet (ﷺ) answered, “*May Allah forgive you, Abū Bakr! Do you not fall ill? Do you not tire out? Do you not grieve? Do you not*

suffer from fatigue and a lack of vitality [at times]?” Abū Bakr replied, “But, of course.” And so, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “That is part of your requital.”<sup>526</sup> A third narrative indicates that when the Muslims heard this *āyah*, they had difficulties adjusting to its meaning, in that they were hard pressed to figure out how they would be able to redeem themselves. So, Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) counseled them, “Be together and do as much good as you can. Every affliction that befalls a Muslim [in this direction] is comparable to an atonement — even if it were a thorn’s prick or a life’s misfortune.”<sup>527</sup> This would indicate that part of Allah’s (ﷻ) payback for a Muslim’s misdeeds in this world comes in the form of ailments, afflictions, maladies, and misfortunes. The physiological stress and emotional pressure that comes with all that, if controlled, is a way of requital and reparation.

In recapitulating the concentrated meanings of the above *āyah*, at least the following four inferences are significant:

1. No individual or society should ever be under the false impression that his or its heritage, tradition, words, or claims are going to save it. What will deliver people on the Final Day and what will give them stature in this world is productive work, “Whoever does what is right does it for [the benefit of] his own self, and whoever does what is wrong does it to [the detriment of] his own self; and Your Sustainer is not One who does injustice to people” (41:46).
2. Virtuous deeds are in need of humans who are committed to Allah (ﷻ). Deeds in and of themselves are neutral, being neither good, nor bad; it is the human being who gives definition to his own labor. And thus, a commitment to Allah (ﷻ) raises the value of work and labor to its heavenly destiny. A demonstration of this point is the *mushriks* who, at the time this Qur’an was revealed, were the custodians of the Ka’bah, and in this capacity, they were the ones who fed the pilgrims and offered them accommodations. But when all these services (deeds) are not devoted to Allah (ﷻ) they have no post-worldly positive value.
3. The quality of *dīn* appears when there are Muslims whose sincere working direction is toward Allah (ﷻ), “And who could

be of better *dīn* than he who orients himself [via good deeds] to Allah, and follows the *millah* of Ibrāhīm...”

4. Reference is made here to Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) to reinforce the continuity of the prophetic legacy. From Ibrāhīm to Muhammad (ﷺ), there was only one central message: the sovereignty of Allah (ﷻ) and man’s service to Him. This relationship between man and his Sustainer is focused more on what he does than on what he says. Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) is not the theoretical father of abstract biblicalists; rather, he is the practical example of true-to-life scripturalists.

When thoughts of work and labor arise in the mind of man, these cannot be divorced from issues pertaining to possession, ownership, and wealth. The compensation for work is either monetary value, or some other thing of material worth. This begins to snowball into amassed wealth. And before any of the terrible consequences related to the ill distribution of wealth set in, the *āyah* quickly reminds man, **“For, to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth; and, indeed, Allah inundates everything.”**

Man is in need of these constant reminders so that he does not lose his sense of direction toward Allah (ﷻ). Man has a tendency to attribute the possessions acquired through his labor to himself. The admonition and redirection here in this *āyah* tells an inattentive man, who is prone to self-pride, that his labor does not bring him accessories that are his; on the contrary, his labor brings him resources and possessions that are Allah’s (ﷻ) — possessions he is only temporarily in charge of. Man should not allow his love for ownership to mislead him from Allah (ﷻ). He should behave reverentially with the knowledge that all these things on earth and everywhere else belong to Allah (ﷻ) and that he will eventually find his way to salvation and the pleasurable encounter with He who has permanent possession of property and plenty. If man keeps his sight on this fact, he will realize that Allah (ﷻ) engulfs and encircles all labor and the fruits thereof.

## Power and Dominion Belong to God

- (4:127) And they will ask you to enlighten them about the laws concerning women. Say, “Allah [Himself] enlightens you about the laws concerning them,” for [His will is shown] in what is being conveyed to you through this divine Writ about orphan women [in your charge], to whom — because you yourselves may be desirous of marrying them — you do not give that which has been ordained for them; and about helpless children; and about your duty to treat orphans with equity. And whatever good you may do — behold, Allah has indeed full knowledge thereof.
- (4:128) And if a woman has reason to fear ill-treatment from her husband, or that he might turn away from her, it shall not be wrong for the two to reach a reconciliation between themselves — for conciliation is best, [even though] being ungriving is ever-present in human souls. But if you do good and are conscious of Him — behold, Allah is indeed aware of all that you do.
- (4:129) And it will not be within your power to treat your wives with equal fairness, however much you desire it; and so, do not allow yourselves to incline toward one to the exclusion of the other, leaving her in a state, as it were, of having and not having a husband. But if you put things to rights and are conscious of Him — behold, Allah is indeed much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace.
- (4:130) And if husband and wife do separate, Allah shall provide for each of them out of His abundance: for Allah is indeed infinite, wise.
- (4:131) And to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth. And, indeed, We have enjoined upon those who were granted revelation before your time, as well as upon yourselves, to remain on guard concerning Allah. And if you deny Him, behold, to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth, and Allah is indeed self-sufficient, ever to be praised.

وَيَسْتَفْتُونَكَ فِي النِّسَاءِ قُلِ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِيهِنَّ وَمَا يُتْلَى  
 عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ فِي يَتِمَى النِّسَاءِ الَّتِي لَا تُوْتُونَهُنَّ مَا كُتِبَ  
 لَهُنَّ وَرَرَّعُونَ أَنْ تَكَحُّوهُنَّ وَالْمُسْتَضَعِّفِينَ مِنَ الْوَالِدَانِ  
 وَأَنْ تَقُومُوا لِلْيَتَامَى بِالْقِسْطِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِهِ  
 عَلِيمًا ﴿١٢٧﴾ وَإِنْ أَمْرًا خَافَتْ مِنْ بَعْلِهَا نُشُوزًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا فَلَا جُنَاحَ  
 عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يُصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا صُلْحًا وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ وَأُحْضِرَتِ الْأَنْفُسُ  
 الشُّحَّ وَإِنْ تُحْسِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا  
 ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَلَنْ نَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ فَلَا  
 تَمِيلُوا كُلَّ الْمِيلِ فَتَدْرُوهَا كَالْمَعْلَقَةِ وَإِنْ تُصْلِحُوا وَتَتَّقُوا  
 فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَإِنْ يَنْفَرَا يُغْنِ اللَّهُ كُلًّا  
 مِّنْ سَعَتِهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ وَاسِعًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٣٠﴾ وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ  
 وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ  
 أَنْ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَإِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ  
 وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَنِيًّا حَمِيدًا ﴿١٣١﴾ وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَفَى  
 بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿١٣٢﴾ إِنْ يَشَأْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ وَيَأْتِ بِآخَرِينَ



وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ قَدِيرًا ﴿١٣٣﴾ مَن كَانَ يُرِيدُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا فَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ  
ثَوَابُ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا ﴿١٣٤﴾

- (4:132) And to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth; and none is as worthy of trust as Allah.
- (4:133) If He so wills, He can cause you, O mankind, to disappear, and bring forth other beings [in your stead]: for Allah has indeed the power to do this.
- (4:134) If one desires the rewards of this world, [let him remember that] with Allah are the rewards of [both] this world and the life to come: and Allah is indeed all-hearing, all-seeing (al-Nisā':127-134).

In keeping with the integrating quality of this *tanzil* (heaven-to-earth Book), this lesson places emphasis on the affairs of women, families, extended families, orphans, children, and the otherwise “helpless” in society, making it clear that these are very important matters indeed. In all pre- and post-Islamic societies, relationships are determined by who exercises power over whom; and this definition even reaches into the marital bond and the one-to-one contact between family members. But the timely lesson here sweeps away these temporal human power configurations that generally lead to an imbalance of social justice in the family unit as well as in the social and brotherly interactions beyond family itself. Normal human relations have a chance to prosper once the “power fuse” is taken out of family and social relations. It is this “power fuse” that destabilizes families, erodes fraternal relations, and even causes the marital bond to fray and break up. The way that the Qur’an prescribes the management of family relations as a model for the care, compassion, and concern necessary for extended relationships in

human society at large has to be the highest level of moral values, high-principled commitments, and virtuous mannerisms.

### **Materialistic Power Equation Has No Place for the Powerless**

The first *āyah* in this section, “**And they will ask you to enlighten them about the laws concerning women...**” is said to have been revealed in response to the following. Umm al-Mu’minīn ‘Ā’ishah described a particularly discriminatory human condition in the pre-Islamic Arabian *jāhiliyah* in which the men of society were not only the guardians, but also the inheritors of female orphans. This female orphan, per the customs and traditions of that society, would have to acquiesce in having all of her possessions assigned to her male guardian, even the sweet edible date-fruit that may have belonged to her. With the institutionalization of this social “norm,” the male guardian would be averse to allowing the orphan girl to marry because then her husband would acquire ownership of her property, thereby preventing the guardian from repossessing the female orphan’s wealth and assets. It was in the power of these guardians to indefinitely suspend the marriage of the female orphans in their custody.<sup>528</sup> In a more specific case, a person by the name of Jābir had an unattractive female cousin, who had an amount of money she had inherited from her father. Jābir, in this instance, was trying to stand in the way of her getting married because he did not want her new husband to assume possession of her wealth. So he went and asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about this and the response came in the form of the *āyah* above.<sup>529</sup>

As for the next *āyah*,

**And if a woman has reason to fear ill-treatment from her husband, or that he might turn away from her, it shall not be wrong for the two to set things peacefully to rights between themselves... (4:128),**

Islamic contextual history indicates that it addressed the particular personal dilemma of Sawdah bint Zam‘ah — the wife of Rasūl-Allah

(ﷺ) — and the more general condition of women who find themselves in a similar situation. It is said in some quarters that Sawdah feared Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) would divorce her, so she asked him to not divorce her, to allow the marriage to continue, and to give her day to 'Ā'ishah.<sup>530</sup> And he did. To bolster the delicate nature of human social fellowship at this level, with a view to preventing fragile feelings from being bruised, this *āyah* enlightens those who are paying attention, “...it shall not be wrong for the two [husband and wife] to reach a cordial understanding of [their mutual] rights...” Therefore, whatever they both agree to is valid.<sup>531</sup> The *āyah* is reported to have elicited the following comment from Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah,

A man has a wife from whom he no longer feels fulfillment. He then decides to divorce her. [And so] she [the wife] says, “You are absolved of me.” In these dubious and volatile circumstances the *āyah* adjusts the roles, “**And if a woman has reason to fear ill-treatment from her husband, or that he might turn away from her, it shall not be wrong for the two to set things in order and with rightfulness...**”<sup>532</sup>

At this point, it would be advisable to recall that this *sūrah* contains two major themes. The first one deals with matters pertaining to women, orphans, blood relationships, inheritance, and the marital bond. The *sūrah* then goes on to broaden the human perspective by demonstrating how the society at large can be treated with the same emotional concern and financial support that binds together an extended family. But every society, even an Islamic one whose cohesiveness comes from functioning as a large family, can be damaged by dysfunctional elements and groupings, and so the *sūrah* deals with issues germane to those who have failed their trust and allegiance with Allah (ﷻ) — the *munāfiqs* — and those who have subverted their trust and allegiance with Him — people who verbally belong to scripture. After a key section that addresses how and why the principle and the complexion of justice

cannot be subverted by anyone, regardless of their social status or lack thereof — especially insofar as misguided Muslims scapegoating the innocent or the powerless — *Sūrah al-Nisā'* here returns to matters pertaining to women and orphans because in most societies, the truncated arms of social justice just do not reach the hopeless and helpless, whose rights are routinely taken for granted, and therefore violated.

This *sūrah*, as indeed the whole Qur'an, relentlessly applies pressure on those who are prone to abuse their power. As most societies exhibit a major problem in honoring the rights of their women and orphans in particular, these *āyāt* drill into men's minds that women and orphans have their established and determined rights when it comes to their *mahr* (bride-wealth, in the case of women) and inheritance. Women and orphans simply cannot be subjected to the injustice or heavy-handedness of their husbands, guardians, or others. The Qur'an is instilling into men's minds the fact that they have to be justice-sensitive when caring for and relating to their womenfolk. The considerations of physical power have to be downplayed, if not voided. Justice has to be the pivot in emotional and physical relations in family and in society.

The struggles of women to gain social, economic, and political equality with men undoubtedly lie deep in history, obscured by the tradition of historical writing that has flowed from male minds and interests. In the Western secular hemisphere of the world, the modern movement of feminism is commonly traced back to the 18th century, to the formation of women's political clubs in Paris in the wake of the French Revolution, and to the nascent campaign for female suffrage, especially associated with the publication in 1792 of *Vindication of the Rights of Women* by the English writer Mary Wollstonecraft.<sup>533</sup>

Feminists in the 19th century were largely concerned with securing for women the right to vote, property rights in marriage, and the right to be educated. Contemporary feminism in the West, arising primarily in the United States in the 1960s, has made male patriarchy in all its aspects the focus of attack and has raised the issue of gender discrimination in a wide variety of fields beyond the

political and economic to include linguistic studies, psychoanalysis, history, and many others. For some in the un-Qur'anic world, feminism has become both a tool of analysis and a practical program.

Some of the objectives of this movement for women's rights have been achieved in different ways and to different degrees in a number of countries around the world. Among the more outlandish of these achievements is the recognition of a woman's "right" to have an abortion and to conceive a child out of wedlock. Other important feminist political victories include the right to have equal pay for equal work and to have equal division of property on divorce.

All of this back-and-forth argument about men vis-à-vis women will never be able to get it right without some input and some insight from the Creator of men and women. This bouncing around about how much and to what extent a woman can perform or deserve is a futile and damaging human feud that will not move human societies forward, especially when they are not guided by this light from Allah (ﷻ). Humanity has to listen very carefully when Allah (ﷻ) speaks. And here in this Qur'an, He is speaking about these thorny issues that have never been settled satisfactorily by a pro-feminine counter-argument or a pro-masculine argument. It is long overdue for men and women to set their sexism aside and settle into a fair and just relationship that is conducive to a better lifestyle and a prosperous society.

All of this is being said while acknowledging that women, orphans, refugees, minorities, etc. have been historically and systematically oppressed by those who have power. But a solution will continue to elude men and women alike if they venture into this area on their own, depending only on their emotional experiences and barring themselves from the source of all solutions — the Qur'an,

**And they ask you to enlighten them about the laws concerning women. Say, "Allah [Himself] enlightens you about the laws concerning them," for [His will is shown] in what is being conveyed to you through this divine Writ about orphan women [in your charge], to**

whom — because you yourselves may be desirous of marrying them — you do not give that which has been ordained for them; and about helpless children; and about your duty to treat orphans with equity. And whatever good you may do — behold, Allah has indeed full knowledge thereof (4:127).

The issue of women is one that always keeps on coming to the fore in the minds of men, to such an extent that it has become one of the signature issues of our time. Women, who look around and see how there is a social and legal discrepancy that favors men over women, have taken this matter either to heart or to extremes. It is to be expected that, in the social remaking of Arabia during the heady days when the Qur'an was being revealed and Muhammad (ﷺ) was its overt example, there would be individuals seeking further clarification from the Prophet (ﷺ) on the topic of women. If Muslim men today were involved in the redefinition of relations between men and women, then they, too, would be asking over and over again about how to behave with equity and normalcy toward their women counterparts. A healthy heart and a motivated mind generate questions and look for answers.

This was the case here: the people in Arabia around Muhammad (ﷺ) who were moved by Islam and remade by the Qur'an had important questions, and they knew where to come for the answers. It is to the credit of these early Muslims to have gone to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and asked him about the position, status, and role of women in family and society — their rights when it comes to inheritance, their rights when it comes to marital relationships, and their rights in financial responsibilities and family roles. How does justice take its course in the interlocking and vigorous family liaison? What makes for a normal and conducive psychological relationship between husband and wife? What can be done to avoid or solve marital problems generated by husband or wife or both? To these questions and more, Allah (ﷻ) provides the answers, "Say [O Muhammad], 'Allah clarifies for you the guidelines concerning them [women].'"

Consider today's world. Women as a "class" are discriminated against all over the world. In many countries they have little, if any, legal standing. They have few rights, little status in society, diminished dignity, and virtually no power. They are subject to male domination in almost all cultures of the world. This domination occupies just about all aspects of women's lives. In countries like the United States, where there has been much said about women's rights, women are still below men on the social ladder. When it comes to "power and prestigious positions," women know what segregation means. Women, in an unwritten law of man-made cultures, are still considered to be inferior to men. They are often only tolerated, humored, endured, or ignored except as sex objects whose function is to serve men domestically and sexually. And with all the media hype and social fanfare in the "civilized" Judeo-Christian, Euro-American world women still do not have equal dignity of a social range that places them on the same legal, political, economic, and religious tier with men. For all practical purposes, women are, in effect, a second, and inferior, sex.

The question of whether women should have equal pay for equal work still circulates in "Judeo-Christian" societies that have fallen far short of the mark. Despite all of the public rhetoric and grassroots activism, the numbers indicate that women are paid less than men for comparable work. Women may be gaining on men in their salaries only to be morphing into men in their anatomies. It is not surprising to point to the fact that in many of these self-promoting "Judeo-Christian" societies, women with college degrees earn, on the average, less than high school male dropouts.<sup>534</sup>

That women have been discriminated against is a fact as old as power itself. It was not until 1920 that women in the United States were allowed to vote.<sup>535</sup> In part, sex discrimination came about due to the childbearing and child rearing role of women. In societies void of social solidarity and security, an abundance of children was an absolute necessity for the survival of the tribe. Because it is the woman's biological role to bear the children and to rear them, she was confined to the "domestic" sphere for practically all of her adult life. Similarly, because it is the man's role to provide for

his wife and children, he had to brave the dangers of the “public” sphere for most of his adult life. Coping satisfactorily with the biological and social difference in roles for men and women, associated with their basic anatomic composition and financial responsibilities, has been one of the greater challenges for human societies as they still have not developed the complementary, interactional fine-tuning of the sexes.

Peculiar to man’s unscriptural cultures, past and present, prestige has been associated with power; therefore the male role in society became the important, and hence “superior,” role filled with distinction and status. Because the woman’s role evidently had no “power component” to it, her tasks were deemed by these power-oriented cultures as less important and woefully insignificant. When governments and regimes themselves became the grand expression of power (masculinity) — not very much concerned with justice and equity — women were doomed to an unending cycle of being trapped in a cultural house arrest. In this power-over-justice type of society, women were closed in, controlled, confined, and classified in terms of their sexual function. Inevitably as a result, society would henceforward be shaped and set in a power configuration. In this power arrangement there was no profit incentive for women to step into areas of economic or political activities. These activities were, per this new power-defined world, male specific. As time went on, this relegating of women to inferior or secondary roles in society, because of the might-makes-right tide, became an accepted pattern of behavior in the male (power) dominated society.

Power here may be substituted for power in early history or in the distant future. The exercise of power does not change except when it is subjected to the discipline of scripture and the wisdom that comes from God — who knows it all. In the materialistic “Judeo-Christian” world, women have had to look for some type of solution that would break the bondage imposed on them. They did not look for God’s word to solve their dilemma because of an unreasonable church (in their minds) and a history of clergy viewpoints unfavorable to the rights and entitlements of women. In this world-



away-from God women had to fight materialism with materialism. So after the onset of the ability to scientifically control pregnancy, women were able to define themselves in terms other than as child-bearers and nurturers. They began to define themselves in terms of their personhood and their "economic value," and to move out from under the oppression and domination of men.

There is no doubt in most people's eyes that there is a difference between men and women. Women are the childbearers; they are physically weaker; and they are affected by their monthly menstrual cycle. But because they are biologically different does not make them inferior. They must be defined in terms of their God-given potential and endowed dignity, not their biological comparison to men on a scale of physical or physiological power. Regrettably this is not so in most countries of the world. Women are still considered inferior for a variety of biological, political, cultural, and even religious reasons. Society, truth be told, is still under the thumb of male chauvinists.

In the United States, for a "civilized" example, women are still defined in terms of their relationship to men. It is still considered natural for men to achieve on a power scale; but unusual, if not peculiar, for women to achieve on a scale of justice. These power accomplishments of males are considered important and prestigious; conversely, the accomplishments of women are considered relatively minor and unimportant as they are considered to be competing on terms defined by men. Still, in the same "civilized" United States, women are lower-ranking in job opportunities: men are invariably picked for jobs that are important unless politics or the law require otherwise. Women are allotted junior-grade roles in politics, social planning, economics, music, art, and advanced scientific research, and play only minor roles in technological and research and development ventures.

In the United States and all other countries in the world who follow suit, women are regarded as sex objects rather than as the twin and complement of men. And as to be expected in a power-crazed establishment, women are rated on their physical endowments, not on their God-given potential and inherent aptitudes.

They are sexually harassed on the job. Millions of women are beaten by their husbands, live-ins, common-law husbands, or pimps. Of the one in four children sexually abused on a regular basis, more than 90% are girls. Tens of thousands of women are raped every year; most are still treated unfairly and suspiciously by law-enforcement personnel.

In addition, women who come from below the poverty line are affected by every social problem, more so than men. Their work both inside and outside the home is undervalued and underpaid. They cannot bargain for their services. They are, in a sense, a throwaway labor force: last hired and first fired. Even as they are expected to be inferior to men economically, more than one-third of them are divorced or live alone. Battered poor women are afraid to leave home because they sense they will wind up on welfare. Displaced women whose husbands and children are gone find it impossible to get worthwhile jobs due to lack of experience and job skills. They must take the most menial jobs and earn only the minimum wage with which they must care for themselves. When this power structure treats women like this, these women begin to feel neglected by their own families, despised by society, and mistreated by others who are poor.

As bad as the common acts of discrimination against women are, they, however, do not compare with the psychological damage done to women by discrimination. It is true that various women experience different kinds of indignities in different ways (and some women say they do not suffer any indignities), but all women suffer some psychological hurt because of discrimination. They are made to feel inferior or are put down, degraded, neglected, put aside, mistreated, or shamed because they are women. This is the final indignity in a social order that is made to fit the power structure. Regardless of one's viewpoint regarding women's emancipation or women's movements for social equality and personal dignity, one thing seems certain. Women must not become a peculiar class of social serfs or subsidiaries of a culture possessed by those in power.

It is out of such confusion that people have questions on their mind and they want answers. True, the early Muslims were strug-

gling to bring down the power structure that breeds these gender inequalities and biases. But, to replace the old structure with something worthier, they needed fresh information from Allah (ﷻ) to see them through their struggle for better husband and wife understanding, and for tighter assimilation between family members. Beyond that, as a people connected to God, they were expected to amplify the family domain by extending a godly sanctioned care to those who were on the “harsh side of life”: the orphans, the widows, the helpless, and the dislocated. These internal questions about how to improve society come to people’s minds today, but they do not turn to Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) for an answer. They end up trying to solve their own problems by temporary solutions that will only exacerbate the awkward situation in the long run.

Cultures that are crafted around materialistic, financial, and military definitions of power inevitably victimize many categories in society; paramount among them are women. The Arabian culture, itself crafted around its tribal and ancestral solidarity, victimized its own womanhood. Women, in Allah’s (ﷻ) Book, are entitled to inheritance rights. Even if there are men and families who act as guardians for some of these women, they still have their God-given rights to their property, wealth, and any acquisition from past generations. Men in these types of societies want to “possess” women because women possess either seduction or wealth. The higher human link of love and bond of beauty finds no valid place in the culture of “masculine and material” power. Another component of this power-first Arabian culture involved a male guardian waiting for an attractive orphan in his custody to grow up so that he may marry her, thereby securing for himself her wealth. However, on the other hand, were this female orphan not attractive enough for him, he had the cultural, social, legal, and “moral” authority to bar her from marriage indefinitely until such time that he could procure her wealth and possessions.

All of the popular solicitation of legal and binding advice is specifically concerned with, among others, the dispossessed two (the *da’ifayn*): women and orphans. The sincerely curious Muslims came to Muhammad (ﷺ) asking about an issue of social justice with

a display of social consciousness. And Allah (ﷻ) said He will answer them. Answers about women's issues should not come from the maintainers of the status quo with its "power over justice" infrastructure. Are there any "Muslims" today who are insightful enough to look around and realize that women are in need of social justice, who are bold enough to disregard the power structure that has perpetuated this injustice, and who are polite enough to look for an answer in this Book of equity and legitimacy?

**And they will ask you to enlighten them about the measures concerning women. Say [O Prophet], "Allah [Himself] enlightens you about these measures concerning them [the women]," for [His will is shown] in what is being conveyed to you through this divine Writ about orphan women [in your custody], to whom — because you yourselves may be desirous of marrying them — you do not give [these female orphans] that which is legally theirs; and about helpless children; and about your duty to treat orphans with equity. And whatever good you may do — behold, Allah has indeed full knowledge thereof (4:127).**

This *āyah* was meant to dismantle centuries of cultural practice. The *jāhili* Arabian expression of this practice concerned a man taking custody of a female orphan and then feeling free to behave as he wished toward the orphan in his care. Completely open to his own fancy, he could marry her — regardless of her own feelings on the subject — and through marriage claim her possessions. Conversely, if she did not appeal to him, he had the cultural, historical, social, and legal authority to ban her from marriage for all her life, and through her death, he would wind up claiming her belongings and possessions. The *āyah* put an end to this practice, saying that no one has any right or justification for doing such a thing.

The bottom line here is that adolescent female orphans will reach an age at which they can decide for themselves who their lifelong marital companions are going to be. Marriage cannot be

justified or sanctioned by the desire or whims of men who tailor their love to financial greed or macho masculine superiority as a means of appropriating another person's assets and holdings. These *āyāt* are about the Muslims' duty to treat orphans with equity.

Divorced women, children without parents, helpless humanity: caring for them and being just in the attention to their rights is the theme of this Book. It is our Islamic responsibility to express all the care and love, as well as the genuine and heartfelt understanding and accommodations for all who need it; and to provide a family of compassion and sympathy. In keeping with this, the power structure that stands between man and his sensitivity and goodness toward the "less fortunate" has to be deconstructed by a popular will that is steeped in these uplifting and life-saving words.

### **Reconciliation Is Preferable to Detachment**

Two symmetrical and methodical struggles are alluded to in these *āyāt*. One of them takes the motivated Muslims into a showdown with the institutionalized establishment of *kufr* and results in an irreconcilable difference that itself winds up being settled at the battlefield. The parallel struggle is an internal one that works on dissolving all the deviations that have gained the status of traditions and culture with a legal footing. This internal cultural clash is fueled by the determination of the higher culture Muslims to dismantle the lower culture habits and heritage. This latter struggle appears to focus on rectifying, reinforcing, and fortifying family and blood-solidarity relations. In the coarse cultures of societies that have broken away from Allah (ﷻ), there is some kind of a rationalization for almost every deviation. But the final word on all these issues does not come from social scientists, behavioral researchers, or intellectuals in the humanities. The final word on how we must behave with each other, how we interact with each other, and how we understand each other comes from Allah (ﷻ),

**And if a woman has reason to fear a discordant impulse  
or a breakaway mannerism from her steady husband, it**

shall not be wrong for the two to ameliorate and adjust [the difference] between themselves: for cordial relations are best, and selfishness is ever-present in human nature. But if you do good and are conscious of Him — behold, Allah is indeed aware of all that you do.

And it will not be within your range [of practical behavior] to behave in identical fairness to your [multiple] wives, however much you desire it; and so, do not allow yourselves to gravitate toward one at the [emotional] expense of the other, leaving her in a state, as it were, of having and not having a husband. But if you make amends and are on alert pertaining to Allah's ultimate power and authority — behold, Allah is in fact much-forgiving, a donor of grace (4:128–129).

In this Qur'anic journey, during the first 35 *āyāt* of *Sūrah al-Nisā'*, the Muslims were apprised of how to deal with odd or uncongenial behavior on the part of the wife and what should be done to keep the family together when this happens. Now, in our Qur'anic journey, the same problem of *nushūz* and disinclination, when it is the husband's failing, is being considered with a view to satisfying, as before, the primary goal of harmonizing the husband-wife relationship. In this case, a woman's dignity and personality as well as the family's well-being and prosperity are at stake.

Not to be forgotten here is the fact that the Qur'an is trying to discipline human nature. And there is a tendency, sometimes, in this human nature for husbands and wives to be melodramatic or eccentric, and in the vagaries of this affair, the harmony and balance of relations between the two is disturbed. The otherwise friendly and intimate husband-and-wife connectedness turns into awkward behavior — behavior that may be wild and intemperate, or even artificial. Is it not an expression of Allah's (ﷻ) love for human beings that He gives them the therapeutic information they need in their moments of emotional digression and even failure? Allah (ﷻ) loves them as He gives them the affinity, intimacy, and affection they have for each other as husband and wife; and He

loves them more as He provides them with the pertinent advice they need when these God-given emotions begin to show signs of weakness or breakdown.

In societies that are economically or culturally defined, as opposed to those that are scripturally defined, marriage is a legally or culturally sanctioned union of one man and one woman (monogamy); one man and two or more women (polygyny); and in the outrageous deviation from the human standard, one woman and two or more men (polyandry). The basis of marriage differs quite considerably from one *jāhili* society to the other — romantic love in some cultures; arranged marriages in others — but most marriage ceremonies, contracts, or customs involve a set of rights and duties, such as care and protection, and there is generally an expectation that children will be born of the union to continue the family line, and maintain the family property.

In different cultures and communities there are various conventions and laws that limit the choice of a marriage partner. Restrictive factors include but are not limited to:

1. age limits, below which no marriage is valid;
2. degrees of consanguinity (blood kinship), or other special relationships, peculiar to a certain culture, within which marriage is either forbidden or enjoined;
3. economic factors such as ability to pay a dowry;
4. rank, caste, or religious differences or expectations;
5. medical requirements, such as blood tests, which are a prerequisite in some US states;
6. the necessity of obtaining parental, family, community, class (or royal) consent;
7. the negotiations of a marriage broker in some cultures, as in Japan or formerly among Jewish communities; and
8. color, for example, marriage was illegal until 1985 between “European” and “non-European” people in apartheid South Africa, was illegal until 1967 between white and black people in some southern US states, and was illegal between white and Asian people in some western US states.

In predominantly “Judeo-Christian” cultures, social trends have led to increased legal equality for women within marriage: in England married women were allowed, after 1882, to hold property in their own name; in California community property laws entail the equal division of all assets between the partners on divorce. Other legal changes have made divorce easier, notably in the US and increasingly in the UK, so that remarriage is more and more frequent for both sexes within the lifetime of the original partner.

In most European countries and in the US, civil registration of marriage, as well as, or instead of, a religious ceremony, is obligatory. Common-law marriages — that is, cohabitation as man and wife without a legal ceremony — are recognized for inheritance purposes in, for example, Scotland and some states in the US. As a step to international agreement on marriage law, the United Nations in 1962 adopted a convention on consent to marriage, minimum age for marriage, and registration.

All of the above and much more “cultural baggage” are thrown into what is supposed to be a convivial and cordial relationship between husband and wife. Eventually some of this “official” and “cultural” imposition on the blossoming feelings of love in a family will cause the spouses to “grow” uncomfortable in their love nest. And as the social Muslims struggle to throw man-made culture and man-made laws out of this matrimony they also work on realigning the delicate feelings of both husband and wife.

What should be done when a wife fears her husband will abandon her, given his loss of emotional attachment with her, or his “loss of interest” in her? What can be done at this point to avoid a slippery slope that ultimately leads to divorce? One conciliatory step here is for the wife to help her husband out in his financial obligations if these obligations are proving to be at the source of his fraying emotional ties with her. There may be cases, and this may not be true in all marriages, when a husband spends all his time working, sweating, and exhausting himself away to support wife and family. In time, and if he feels there is no support coming from his wife when she does have the capacity to do so, the husband will begin to show signs of incongruity with and divergence from his



wife. Another complicating factor in such a scenario is that even if there was a cogent diagnosis of the problem, in some cases husbands may feel that it is very difficult for them to accept a “helping hand” from their able wives. The mutual love between them should be strong enough for her to help her husband when he truly needs it, and for him to accept her assistance when he really needs it.

A wife, generally speaking, can detect her husband’s emotional disinclination at an early stage. At an advanced stage it becomes obvious: the husband no longer wants to share her bed. In some cases, husbands may act out in unseemly, indecorous, and unbecoming ways, using foul language or even becoming physically abusive. Some husbands may express their emotional ambivalence by no longer speaking to their wives or by not showing them affection. In some cases age may be a problem, while in other cases, another woman may have “captured” his heart. All of these and any other marital abnormalities would have to be identified and resolved. Any effort to bring husband and wife back to their loving and caring positions is encouraged by Allah’s (ﷻ) guidance.

A wife will have to weigh her emotions carefully to determine for herself whether she will be better off trying to cure this emotionally “frigid” husband or whether she should just save her energy as he may have some other incurable reason for his behavior. The couple should always be reminded of a retroactive fact: the affection and fervency that brought them together in wedlock and love affiliation should be stronger than any other intruding factor,

**And among His wonders is this: He creates for you mates out of your own kind, so that you might incline toward them, and He engenders love and tenderness between you: in this, behold, there are visible clues indeed for all who think [and rethink] (30:21).**

Reconciliation is always better than detachment, separation, and divorce. A wife, after searching deep inside her pool of feelings and in the depths of her heart, should be helpful to her husband if she knows and is confident that he is doing all he can to keep the

family together. The case for rekindling the confidence between husband and wife is even stronger when there are children involved — sons and daughters who need their parents to stay together and help them grow emotionally and physically. Emotional frigidity, marital doubts and marital distress can all easily, in due time, lead to divorce. And divorce is the worst license Allah (ﷻ) gave to man: according to Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ), “*The most unfavorable permit given by Allah [to man] is divorce.*”<sup>536</sup>

Divorce is another issue that man has difficulty with. Some cultures and religions go to one extreme and say divorce is illegal, while others go to the opposite extreme and dispense divorce liberally, for the slightest reason. Divorce is the legal dissolution of a lawful marriage. In some legal books, divorce is distinct from *annulment*, which is a legal declaration that the marriage was invalid to begin with. The ease with which divorce can be obtained in different cultures and countries varies considerably and is also affected by different religious practices.

In the US — that climax of the much touted “Judeo-Christian heritage — divorce laws differ from state to state. The grounds for divorce include adultery (in all states), cruelty, desertion, alcoholism, drug addiction, insanity, and declaration of irreconcilable differences or mutual incompatibility. Quick divorces in states with more “liberal” laws have been restricted by the imposition of minimum residence periods and by the right to challenge the divorce if one party has not been notified of the proceedings. Couples are increasingly negotiating prenuptial agreements that make an advance settlement of division of property and assets, including maintenance provisions. In some states, so-called no-fault divorce laws make divorces readily available to couples with no economic quarrels and with agreeable obligations to children.

The Roman Catholic Church does not permit divorce among its members, and under Pope John Paul II, conditions for annulment were tightened.<sup>537</sup> Laws introduced in some communist/socialist systems in the 1960s made divorce easy and cheap. Maintenance for a wife after divorce decreased in importance, but she was likely to benefit by a more equitable division of property.

This Qur'an teaches its students what they can only learn from Allah (ﷻ). Factually, in the Islamic context, divorce cannot be withheld as illegal and simultaneously cannot be parceled out as an open license for anyone who wants to terminate a marriage on a whim. What cannot be overemphasized is that this Qur'an, unlike anything else, speaks about and to human nature, human potential, human failings, and human success. This Qur'an is not dogmatically stubborn and it is not idealistically impractical. It considers equally and harmoniously human capabilities and human factual probabilities. It counsels against divorce, it tries to avoid divorce, it involves humans in trying to solve the problems that may lead to divorce, it ignites their confidence to work out their differences as husbands and wives, and it sheds light on their human nature and abilities; and in doing so it tries to have them abstain from the last resort to divorce. But when everything is done and nothing works, then the husband and wife who just cannot get along may reluctantly avail themselves of the permission to divorce.

In a remarkable reference to what may be the most common underlying problem in marriages, the words of the Qur'an are not only therapeutic but also right on the mark, **"...and selfishness is current in human feelings."** This is a fact of life: generally speaking, human or social beings are covetous and stingy. Wives are possessive of the rights due to them from their husbands. They demand their share of financial support, their means of family maintenance, and their portion of spousal cordial relations. This is equally true of husbands, though the percentage may be different, depending on the culture, country, or religious affiliation. A wife is particularly keen on her bride-wealth (*mahr*), what is financially due to her in case of separation, an alimony, etc. Men are equally covetous of controlling and accumulating the money in their personal possession. But what is more important than these selfish feelings is the priority of the family. If the "ego" is sidelined in the husband and wife relationship, an amicable reconciliation is always possible.

The refractory human nature undisciplined by scripture desires to withhold money and hold back feelings. Husbands and wives have to learn how to discuss the terms of their relationships,

give when giving is what it takes to keep the marriage together, and be forthcoming and generous in feelings and possessions to one another. Wives are not forced to do anything to keep their husbands in a marital relationship. Nothing comes out of forcing feelings on someone else. These are issues at the level of emotions and feelings, where such feelings have to be naturally empathetic; therefore, **“But if you do good [by giving your spouse of what you have] and are on guard [against Allah’s active presence] — behold, Allah is surely aware of all that you do.”** You do good by putting the strong feelings of love back where they belong and in as vibrant a way as they have always been. You — husband and wife — adjust yourselves to each other. You refit your lives back into each other. This is the good that you can do.

### The Qur’an Works with the Deficiencies of Human Nature

**And it will not be within your power to treat your wives with equal fairness, however much you desire it; and so, do not allow yourselves to incline toward one to the exclusion of the other, leaving her in a state, as it were, of having and not having a husband. But if you take reconciliatory and corrective measures and are conscious of Allah [and His corrective power] — behold, Allah is certainly much-forgiving, very merciful (4:129).**

Religious schools, institutions, and universities, especially the secular ones in the crusading West and their analogs elsewhere that have tried hard to rationalize against the Qur’an, are not averse to producing “wise guys” who say they are turned off by the Qur’an. They claim they cannot find anything intellectually stimulating therein. They regret having learned Arabic, the language of this Qur’an. They say they could have spent that unretrievable time studying the “scientific” languages of the world such as English, French, German, etc. Little do they know that almost every *āyah* in

the Qur'an is the fountainhead for thought and theories. This is another one of those *āyāt* that serves as a framework for sexual relations and gender interaction. But like any other social grouping, we Muslims also have the lazy minds that do not want to absorb these essential meanings and then take them out into the social laboratory of life.

Allah (ﷻ) created man and woman, male and female, husband and wife. He knows what they are capable of doing and what they are not. And here, in these words, He tells the masculine half of humanity that he will not be able to care for his wives in a precisely equal allocation of feelings and inclination. Even if men wanted to be that way as a matter of mental conviction and conscientious belief, they will fail, per this *āyah*. This does not mean they should not try to be as equitable and forthcoming as they possibly can. But husbands *and* wives need to be cognizant of the fact that men are only going to be able to channel their human nature inasmuch as there is a “drive” in this human nature to do so. In strictly material things — housing, spending, clothing, cash allowance, etc. — a husband will be able to allocate on a fairly equitable basis. When they are married to multiple wives, husbands are also responsible for being fair in their day-to-day interactions, in their behavior, and in the level of protection they provide for each wife. However, insofar as “instinctual attraction,” love, and lovemaking are concerned, a man will fall short if he is married to more than one wife. Men are duty-bound to equitably distribute the material things they have control over; but in things like attractiveness, passion, admiration, and other feelings they really do not have a firm grip on, they are told to do as much as they can and not to be biased or disrespectful when they fall short of what might be characterized as detached impartiality. It is reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said in this context of being a fair and evenhanded husband, “O Allah! *This [behavior toward my wife] is my share in what I possess [of emotions]; do not take me to task for what You possess and I do not [possess].*”<sup>538</sup>

If there is an internal inclination of the husband toward one wife more than the other(s), it should not be to her/their absolute exclusion, “...do not allow yourselves to incline toward one

**[wife] to the exclusion of the other [wife].**” No wife should feel she is only a wife in theory, a wife on a legal document, or a wife shut out from her husband’s strong feelings and intense passion in whichever way the husband may express that to her. A wife ought not be left in suspension, feeling neither married nor divorced.

If a marital relationship hits rock bottom, when the elements of love, passion, and mutual devotion to each other no longer exist, and no effort at reconciliation seems to have met with any success, then it might be better for both husband and wife to divorce. A husband and wife share emotions and exchange love; once that has expired, no one will be able to keep them together by official laws or artificial edicts, **“And if husband and wife do separate, Allah shall provide for each of them out of His abundance: for Allah is indeed infinite, wise.”**

In what passes today for the Old and the New Testaments, marriage is considered sacred, guaranteeing the stability of the family, the strength of the people — tribe, nation, or church — and the creation of happiness for all concerned. However, from earliest times, in the view of those who interpret biblical history, the Hebrew law recognized that certain behaviors could break up a marriage, and provision was made for divorce — the dissolution of marital bonds (Deuteronomy, 24:1–4). According to this Judeo-Christian narrative of history, the Hebrew marriage began with the engagement ceremony, hence even an engagement could be broken only by a divorce (Hosea, 2:19). This, they say, is the significance of Matthew, 1:18–25, which describes the desire of Joseph to break off his engagement to Mary (ﷺ) privately, to spare her family embarrassment, once he discovered she was pregnant. Only a revelation in a dream (Matthew, 1:20–24) convinced Joseph to go forward with the marriage.

While women, generally, did not have the same rights as men, the rabbinical law was just and extended the right of divorce to women as well as to men. Marriage was considered a contract, in which the man promised to provide food, clothing, shelter, and sexual relations. If any of these elements of marriage were withheld, then the wife could seek a divorce. The Law of Moses (ﷺ) forbade

priests to marry divorced women (Leviticus, 21:14), yet the divorced daughter of a priest could return to her father for protection (Leviticus, 22:13).

Adultery, on the part of the wife, was the only grounds for divorce (Exodus, 20:14; Deuteronomy, 5:18), but there are echoes of other conditions that were apparently recognized as grounds for divorce, as mentioned above. The prophets, they say, in their criticisms of Israel and Judah, implied that men divorced their wives for small problems, flouting the sacredness of marriage altogether. Adultery, too, was directed toward the woman, although when a married woman was caught in the act, the man with her, married or not, was also subject to death by stoning. However, the burden of this fell on women, as a wife could be stoned to death if it was later discovered that she had engaged in illicit sex before her marriage (Deuteronomy, 22:13–30). Divorce was formal, by the handing over of a written bill of divorcement.

Compare the scanty information that dwells in the Judeo-Christian tradition about marriage and divorce with the significant and pertinent information that is found in the Qur'an. And in this regard, well-meaning Jews and Christians can only be advised by committed Muslims to take a closer look at God's revealed word here and not be so contrite as to affirm that the words and meanings in this Qur'an can only be from God, the Maker and the Creator of human nature and its many manifestations.

### **Covetous Ownership Is the Door to Discord**

**And to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth. And, indeed, We have enjoined upon those who were granted revelation before your time, as well as upon yourselves, to remain alert concerning Allah [and His corrective power]. And if you are in denial, behold, to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth, and Allah is, of course, self-sufficient, ever to be praised. And to Allah belongs**

all that is in the heavens and all this is on earth; and none is as worthy of trust as Allah.

If He so wills, He can cause you, O mankind, to disappear, and bring forth other beings [in your stead]: for Allah has indeed the power to do this. If one desires the payoffs of this world, [let him remember that] with Allah are the final payments of [both] this world and the life to come: and Allah is indeed all-hearing, all-seeing (4:131–134).

This is, in truth, a thoughtful sequence of facts. The lesson began by teaching Muslims the truth about women, the orphans, and the less fortunate people in society. Then it moved into the area of husband and wife incompatibilities that may, from time to time and from marriage to marriage, erode the harmony and love, which united husband and wife in wedlock to begin with. Corrective measures were prescribed to synchronize any discordant notions on the part of both spouses. And now the lesson seems to take a long leap by saying, **“And to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth.”** The rejoinder here is the fact that everything — nothing excluded — belongs to Allah (ﷻ).

This infers that many of the social and family problems human beings encounter in their daily and interactive lives stem from a claim to possession or ownership. Power figures in society act as if they own other people’s lives, especially people who are poor and downtrodden. A similar variable is at work in the family. Power figures in the family act as if they own less powerful members of the family — orphans, wives, “adopted children,” etc. Going to the heart of the problem, Allah (ﷻ) in these words is putting human behavior where it belongs by reminding all and sundry that everything in life, existence, and creation belongs to Allah (ﷻ). This fact is stated many times throughout the word-perfect Qur’an.

In the course of life, possession or the act of possessing implies that the owner has authority. He (or she) may behave as he sees fit in his own domain of property and people. But this false notion is quickly corrected by the truth herein; that is, the real owner is



Allah — and only Allah (ﷻ). He alone is the Lord of man and the Lord of the land. Man's own petty control condition of transient items in an interim life should never cause him to command and control the less fortunate in society and family. These *āyāt* suggest that all people of scripture, be they Jews, Christians, or Muslims, fall short of this vital fact. They do not honor, more in what they do than in what they say, the fact that Allah (ﷻ) owns everything far and everything near; and therefore, He has the authority over man — an authority that is fair and equitable to all members of society as well as all members of the family.

The redeeming feature in this scenario where human relations begin to fail is the quality of *taqwá*. People who have this essential *taqwá* are not going to be trapped by an ego that imposes itself on others — even on the closest human being to that person: his or her spouse — and results in breakaway elements in society or breakaway members in the family. It is this *taqwá* that realigns human nature with the human Maker. The more a person is conscious of Allah's (ﷻ) power, the more he is unconscious of his “own” power. And the opposite is also true: the more a person is preoccupied with his own power the less he is attentive to Allah's (ﷻ) power. Within this psychological domain can be found most of the difficulties and troubles that erupt in society and burst out in the family.

The problem with people of ego, power, and reigning influence is that they fail to place their trust in Allah (ﷻ) as the Power, the Authority, and the “Control.” Human history and social ups and downs betray a human record that fails to entrust ultimate power in human life to Allah (ﷻ). Some men feel they are responsible for the affairs of society, meaning that if they do not move in and control society, then it will collapse or fail to progress. These “control freaks” sometimes are so blinded by their power positions in society and family that they cannot see the larger picture. The Qur'an here is simply telling everyone to look at the issues in their larger context — one step at a time. First, everyone is required to affirm that it is Allah (ﷻ) who owns everything. Flowing from this fact is the next all-important fact: it is Allah (ﷻ) who is the Authority. Once people get these facts settled in their public mind

and in their social behavior, they can expect a significant decrease in the intra-family and intra-social problems they are experiencing. All of this can be accomplished when people recapture the meaning and the implications of *taqwá*.

There may be mass human occasions in history characterized by a consistent and inordinate rejection of such a relationship with God. In such instances, man deliberately turns away from God, rejects the information that comes to him from God, and — fortified by his own power-definition — turns against God by ignoring Him or by scorning Him. This is another manifestation of *kufur*. Preempting this human error of tragic and cataclysmic social consequences in this world and in the one to come, Allah (ﷻ) says, **“If He so wills, He can cause you, O mankind, to disappear, and bring forth other beings [in your stead]: for Allah honestly has the power to do this.”**

To understand what is going on in a world characterized by swift and often fundamental change, it is worth keeping an eye on power — man’s power and Allah’s (ﷻ) power: who gains, who loses, and who seems always to be the victor whatever the circumstances happen to be. One of the banalities in the social sciences of our times is that all power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Even in most totalitarian systems, although the power of the rulers is overwhelming and the corruption usually pervasive, there are limits on power so that no individual can assume absolute control. For the most part, power — whether of rulers or of commercial magnates — is constrained, and the major instrument of that constraint is law. All of this is done less to discipline and diminish man’s greed than to regulate it as a means of perpetuating it.

A world order that no longer reports to Allah (ﷻ) contrives its own ideas about social forces. Sometimes these ideas are presented as theories. One of these ethical theories argues that the reason man has ethics, and makes laws out of ethics, is that cooperation works. In light of this theory, the strongest, most dynamic, successful, and happiest groups, communities, societies and nations are the ones in which people work together most, rather than those in which they always compete with each other. Ethics are an expres-

sion of that cooperation: treating other people as you yourself would like to be treated and making sure that anything you do does not undermine the general well-being of your group. Thus, when people do compete in business or in politics or to get good jobs, they do so in a framework of rules that all of them accept. So says the theory, in any case.

It is, of course, not so simple in practice. Countries in which there is massive corruption are usually economically inefficient, environmentally self-destructive and run by governments that show little practical concern for the welfare of ordinary citizens. While unethical individuals can always get ahead in the short term, unethical societies typically head toward self-destruction, usually sooner than later. The United States as a society has been doing relatively well now for several decades, but as it gets itself involved in plundering the planet and combining the vices of wealth with the vices of power, American “prosperity” will not be able to recover from the inevitable downturns in the economic cycle. A world system based on the acknowledgment of Allah’s (ﷻ) power in society, which affirms His laws in the Qur’an, would, by definition, be more peaceful than one based on naked power and greed. People in power no longer have faith in and trust God’s word. Scripture in the corridors of power is out-of-date. This is precisely the right time to tune into these scriptural facts,

**And to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth; and none is as worthy of trust as Allah. If He so wills, He can cause you, O mankind, to go away, and bring forth other beings [in your stead]: for Allah surely has the power to do this. If one desires the wages of this world, [let him remember that] with Allah are the compensations of [both] this world and the life to come: and Allah is indeed all-hearing, all-seeing (4:132–134).**

The world today is living in a dangerous psychological condition. Its mentality has been conditioned to exclude God from feel-

ings, thoughts, and actions. Because of this excommunication of God humanity is beginning to reach the end of its line. Individuals are no longer satisfied with their personal lives, families are no longer happy with their own members, and societies are incapable of staying together. At all three levels — individuals, families, and societies — there is an obvious discomfort with the way things are going. Everyone is looking for a solution in the wrong place. Now, though, is the last call for everyone to take notice of Allah (ﷻ) and bind to Him with all their hearts and capabilities. No doubt, the human impression of power is a major impediment, but man will have to approach this arrogance of power, concentration of power, and wielding of power in the way he is taught by Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ). Prophets who do not speak to power, scriptures that do not speak to strength, and Muslims who do not speak to might are pointless. Justice has to be done on earth in the same way it exists in heaven; and by skipping the issue of power man will not be able to have justice on earth.

This worldly life has to be infused in our conscience with the world that we are all approaching. It will take an enormous effort on our part to remake the public mind and attitude in a way that is fond of Allah and in a bond with Allah (ﷻ). In human terms, this is a daunting task; but on the terms of Allah (ﷻ), who is guiding us, it is promising and reassuring.

## Impact of *Nifāq* on Muslim Attitudes to Social Justice

- (4:135) O you who are securely committed [to Allah]! Be ever dynamic in standing up for equity, bearing witness to the truth for the sake of Allah, even though it be against your own selves or your parents and kinsfolk. Whether the person concerned be rich or poor, Allah's claim takes precedence over [the claims of] either of them. Do not, then, follow your own desires, lest you swerve from justice: for if you distort [the truth] or disregard it, behold, Allah is indeed aware of all that you do!
- (4:136) O you who have committed yourselves [to Allah]! Rededicate yourselves to Allah and His Apostle, and to the divine Writ that He has bestowed from on high upon His Apostle, step by step, as well as to the revelation that He sent down aforetime; for he who denies Allah, and His angels, and His revelations, and His apostles, and the Last Day, has indeed gone far astray.
- (4:137) Behold, as for those who express commitment [to Allah], and then deny the truth, and again come to express commitment [to Allah], and again deny the truth, and thereafter grow stubborn in their denial of the truth — Allah will not forgive them, nor will He guide them in any way.
- (4:138) Announce you to such [allegiance] betrayers that grievous suffering awaits them.
- (4:139) As for those who take the deniers of the truth for their allies in preference to the committed Muslims, do they hope to be honored by them when, behold, all honor belongs to Allah [alone]?
- (4:140) And, indeed, He has enjoined upon you in this divine Writ that whenever you hear people deny the truth of Allah's manifestations [in human affairs] and mock at these [manifestations], you shall avoid their company until they begin to talk of other things — or else, verily, you will become like them. Behold, together with those who deny the

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ  
 أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ ۚ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ  
 بِهِمَا ۗ فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَن تَعْدِلُوا ۚ وَإِن تَلَوُّا أَوْ تَعْرِضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ  
 بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١٣٥﴾ يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ  
 وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَلَ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ ۚ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِن قَبْلُ  
 وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ۚ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ  
 ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿١٣٦﴾ إِن الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ ءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا  
 ثُمَّ أزدَادُوا كُفْرًا لَّمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِيَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيَهْدِيَهُمْ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٣٧﴾ بَشِيرٍ  
 الْمُنْفِقِينَ ۚ إِنَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٣٨﴾ الَّذِينَ يَنخِذُونَ الْكٰفِرِينَ أَوْلِيَآءَ  
 مِن دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ أَيْبِنُعُونَ عِنْدَهُمُ الْعِزَّةَ فَإِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٣٩﴾  
 وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَن إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ ءَايَاتِ اللَّهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا  
 وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا تَفْعَدُوا مَعَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ ۗ إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا  
 مَثَلْتُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنْفِقِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٤٠﴾  
 الَّذِينَ يَرَبُّونَ بِكُمْ فَإِن كَانَ لَكُمْ فَتْحٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَكُنْ  
 مَعَكُمْ وَإِن كَانَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نَصِيبٌ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَسْتَحِذْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَنَمْنَعَكُم

مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ وَلَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ  
 لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٤١﴾ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ  
 خَادِعُهُمْ وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كَسَالَى يُرَاءُونَ النَّاسَ وَلَا  
 يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٤٢﴾ مُذَبذَبِينَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ لَا إِلَى هَؤُلَاءِ وَلَا إِلَى  
 هَؤُلَاءِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٤٣﴾ يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا  
 نَنخِذُوا الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ أُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ  
 عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا مُبِينًا ﴿١٤٤﴾ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِي الدَّرَكِ الْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ  
 النَّارِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا ﴿١٤٥﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا  
 وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِاللَّهِ وَأَخْلَصُوا دِينَهُمْ لِلَّهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ  
 وَسَوْفَ يُؤْتِي اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٤٦﴾ مَا يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ  
 بِعَدَابِكُمْ إِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ وَءَامَنْتُمْ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ شَاكِرًا عَلِيمًا ﴿١٤٧﴾

truth Allah will gather in Hell those of dual [or multiple] allegiance [*munāfiqs*].

- (4:141) Who but wait to see what betides you: thus, if triumph comes to you from Allah, they say, “Were we not on your side?” whereas if those who deny the truth are in luck, they say [to them], “Have we not earned your affection by defending you against those committed Muslims?” But Allah

will judge between you all on the Day of Resurrection; and never will Allah allow those who deny the truth to break through the committed Muslims.

- (4:142) Behold, the dual-loyalists [*munāfiqs*] seek to deceive Allah — the while it is He who caused them to be deceived [by themselves]. And when they rise to pray, they rise reluctantly, only to be seen and praised by men, remembering Allah but seldom,
- (4:143) Wavering between this and that, [true] neither to these nor those. But for him who Allah lets go astray you can never find [for him] any way.
- (4:144) O you who have committed [to Allah’s power]! Do not take the deniers of the truth for your allies in preference to the committed Muslims! Do you want to place before Allah a manifest proof of your guilt?
- (4:145) Verily, those who switch allegiance [*munāfiqs*] shall be in the lowest depth of the Fire, and you will find none who could support them.
- (4:146) But excepted shall be they who repent, and live righteously, and hold fast to Allah, and grow sincere in their commitment to Allah alone: for these shall be one with the committed Muslims — and in time Allah will grant to all committed Muslims a mighty reward.
- (4:147) Why would Allah cause you to suffer [for your past sins] if you are grateful and [deeply] committed to Allah — seeing that Allah is always responsive to gratitude, all-knowing? (al-Nisā’:135–147).

This innermost and strategic lesson is compelling material for people of God. It further attunes them to the ineluctable concepts of equity and justice. People who are “religiously” related to God are socially responsible for justice. And the *āyah* places the consignment of fairness and justice upon the “committed Muslims.” Only they who are in a “social relationship” with Allah (ﷻ) can deliver this unqualified justice. Since the committed Muslims are the ones who are living the life and letter of this revelation in Scripture,



they feel the issues of justice and impartiality in a way that no others do. From the directives of these *āyāt*, the Muslims are required to take direct charge and responsibility for justice — without being distracted by any personal preferences, inter-communal interests, or group favoritism.

The current definitions that reconfigure “justice” to fit into the ambitions of certain constituencies, national priorities, international realities, or sub-national classes are all incompatible and incorrect when they are measured against this announced Qur’anic standard. What counts here in the determination and definition of justice is the human Islamic relationship with Allah (ﷻ) that says from the outset: we are in a power relationship with Allah (ﷻ) and we realize we need His scriptural truth to survive the subtleties of discrimination and the brutalities of domination. If anyone is looking for strict justice and unfailing fairness, this is where he can find it — in this fair and balanced Scripture.

No one should be under the false impression that justice is an easy thing to do — it is not. Sometimes it is psychologically difficult and socially unpopular to live and act by the norms and the mandate of justice. Human nature, when left to its individuality, will want to favor its own relatives or its own race. This type of individualistic human nature tends to take the side of the powerful against the powerless in a court of law. Family considerations almost always play a prejudiced role that tips the balance of justice to favor a cousin or another blood-relative. Here Muslims in their undying commitment to Allah (ﷻ) are told to deliver and administer justice outside of these personal and prejudiced considerations. Justice has to be prosecuted with neutrality and nonpartisanship.

Muslims, per these *āyāt*, are required to administer justice in a frame of mind that is always conscious of its trans-worldly commitment to Allah (ﷻ), His angels, His scriptures, His Apostles (ﷺ), and the Final Day. Each of these components of the living Islamic conscience has its effect on devout Muslims who feel it their heavenly duty on earth to dispense unprejudiced justice. This relationship between the inner thoughts of active Muslims and the rendering of justice is what makes Muslims higher on the scale of

social justice than those who are more concerned with national justice, gender justice, class justice, tribal justice, or any other form of “biased justice.”

Continuing with this theme of social justice, the *āyāt* in this lesson move into the territory of dissemblers and deceivers who can live neither with a healthy loyalty to Allah (ﷻ), nor with a universal standard of justice. These allegiance shifters, mentioned here as a case in point, may contribute to an imbalance in society that makes it that much more difficult for the true Muslims to deliver justice on the grand scale and with the purity of purpose that is outlined here by Allah (ﷻ) Himself. Allegiance equivocators, such as the ones identified in this section, claim they are with the Islamic bloc when it is successful and winning; but in the same breath, they say they have been with the *kāfirs* all along when they appear to have the upper hand in their war against the Muslims. These are the *munāfiqs* — and attached to their personalities and behavior patterns are clues by which any perceptive Muslim may identify them. They perform their *ṣalāh* with reluctance and a certain degree of unwillingness; they make a public show of discharging their “Islamic duties” so as to have the other Muslims take notice of their “religiosity” while their hearts have no considerate and altruistic attachment to Allah (ﷻ). They stand out in Islamic society because they do not assimilate into the thrust and drive for Allah (ﷻ); they do not emotionally belong to the sincere Muslims and they do not physically belong to the camp of *kufr*.

As an ongoing reinforcement, the words of the Qur’an are primed to rip the cover off the most treacherous segment of society — a segment that operates deep inside the ambivalent recesses of loyalty and fidelity. The *āyāt* about the racism of Banū Isrā’īl and the *āyāt* about the perfidy of the *munāfiqs* match closely in their length and in their depth. The Muslims need to be well-informed, well-advised, and well-versed on this segment of society that pretends to be Islamic while it intends to be *kāfir*. The massive amount of *āyāt* about these *munāfiqs* throughout the Qur’an cannot but indicate how bothersome, troublesome, and underhanded they are. The behavior of an Islamic society should be to disengage with

them whenever they ridicule Allah's (ﷻ) illustrious will in the affairs of man.

Muslims are presented with the character of these *munāfiqs* and their dubious persona so that they are not drawn into the attitude of *nifāq*. What gives the *munāfiqs* away is the fact that they identify with the power of the *kāfirs* and become something like their “natural” allies. Since they earnestly believe that no one will ever be able to conquer *kufr*, the *munāfiqs* have more than a passing admiration for the “grandeur” of *kāfir* establishments. Even when Allah (ﷻ) expressly states that glory and pride are Allah's (ﷻ), these *munāfiqs* in their psychological fiber believe that glory and pride are the traits of the *kāfirs*. With the *munāfiqs*' proclivity toward *kāfir* “power,” Allah (ﷻ) assures the committed Muslims that He will not allow the *kāfirs* to derail the committed Muslims. With the untangling of these latent feelings within an Islamic society, the words of Allah (ﷻ) make it clear that the *munāfiqs* are destined to go into the bowels of the punishing Fire.

It is hard to miss, by reading these *āyāt*, how closely affiliated the *munāfiqs* and the *kāfirs* are. Closely related to this recognition is the appropriateness of weeding out the false Muslims from the forceful ones. A strong and vigorous Islamic society will demand a keen eye on its potential traitors and sleeping spies. Moving further in this direction, the *āyāt* go on to communicate the nature of social parasites: they want to live off a status quo that belongs to oppressive regimes and the projected power of tyrants, dictators, and totalitarians.

Presented in this light, the Qur'an is as informative today as it was hundreds of years ago, and it will remain this informative as long as there is intelligent life. If the Muslims are to reconstitute an *ummah*, they will be in urgent need of all the knowledge and experience that is provided here in this Book from cover to cover.

The final point in this lesson is that Allah (ﷻ) has no pressing desire to punish people. All He asks of them is to commit their lives to Him. And when one deeply contemplates the issue, how is it possible for a limited and needy human being to not commit himself to Allah (ﷻ)? What interferes in this normal relationship?

The answer to these questions is the corroding part of human life on earth, whatever that answer may be.

### A Short History of Human Attempts to Achieve Social Justice

O you who are securely committed [to Allah]! Be ever dynamic in standing up for equity, bearing witness to the truth for the sake of Allah, even though it be against your own selves or your parents and kinsfolk. Whether the person concerned be rich or poor, Allah's claim takes precedence over [the claims of] either of them. Do not, then, follow your own desires, lest you veer from justice: for if you distort [the truth], behold, Allah is indeed aware of all that you do! (4:135).

The responsibility for equity (*qist*) is placed on devout and Qur'anically observant Muslims: *al-ladhīna āmanū*. These covenant-bearing Muslims are the ones who have inherited the eternal task of establishing, maintaining, and adjudicating justice, **“Be ever dynamic in standing up for equity...”** In its broadest and most general signification, the term *equity* denotes the spirit and the habit of fairness, justness, and right dealing that would regulate the intercourse of men with men — the rule of doing to all others as we desire them to do to us, or as some would say, to live honestly, to harm nobody, and to render to every man his due. Equity therefore is the synonym of natural right or justice. In a sense its obligation is ethical rather than jural, and its discussion belongs to the sphere of morals. In an Islamic lifestyle, morals pertain not only to the self, but more widely to social behavior, public consciousness, and consensual conduct. Equity is grounded in the precepts of the conscience, not in the intimidation that comes from the exercise of physical force.

In a restricted sense, equity denotes equal and impartial justice as between two persons whose rights or claims are in conflict; justice, that is, as ascertained by natural reason or ethical insight, but independent of the secularly formulated body of law. In a still

more restricted sense, it is a system of jurisprudence, or branch of remedial justice, administered by certain tribunals, distinct from the common-law courts, and empowered to decree “equity” in its moral and conscientious sense. Here it becomes a complex of well-settled and well-understood rules, principles, and precedents.

This is no small task. The words from heaven are tasking committed Muslims with the universal duty of justice and equity. This does not simply pertain to local town-hall justice; rather, it is an equity and justice that permeates human societies, transcends cultural divides, and supersedes other interpretations of justice — especially those that are cut off from a divine source. This is referring to what has come to be known as social justice, economic justice, and judicial justice, or in Qur’anic words, *qist*.

In recent history, the human attempt to establish social justice was, more or less, expressed in the variety of socialist theories that were applied from country to country and from time to time. The politically wide-ranging doctrine of socialism first emerged in Europe during industrialization in the 18th century. This was concurrent with the bitter separation of public life from the church, which was relegated to a few hours of preaching on Sundays. Most socialists would agree that social and economic relationships play a major part in determining how far human potential can go, and that the unequal ownership of property under capitalism creates an unequal and conflictive society. The disavowal of private property rights or some means of counterbalancing its power, it is held, will produce a more equal society where individuals enjoy greater freedom and are able to realize their potential more fully. In this way, these theories suggest that a socialist society will be more cooperative and fraternal. Possibly the major bifurcation in the socialist stream of thought lies less in what a socialist society would look like than in the means of achieving it. There are those who believe that to bring it about, revolution is necessary, while others believe that change can be achieved through reforms within the confines of democratic politics. There are also differences related to what degree capitalist production needs to be eradicated in order to bring about a socialist society.

The human condition in its economic, social, and racial discrepancies and discrimination cries out for a remedy. And in the absence of guidance coming from the Creator — the source of definite knowledge — human beings in the persona of their scientists and scholars try their best to solve the problems of inequality, injustice, and indifference. Even at their best, with all their preeminent minds in the mix, they will still demonstrate their inability to reach the balance that is required for consistent and steady human progress.

One such attempt at dealing with injustice by clueless humans, even though they may have good intentions, is *anarchism* — a generic term for political ideas and movements that reject the state and other forms of authority and coercion in favor of a society based exclusively upon voluntary cooperation between individuals. To anarchists, the state, whether democratic or not, is always viewed as a means of supporting a ruling class or elite, and as an encumbrance to social relations. However, they differ in their notion of the nature of their future society, their proposals ranging from a communist society based on mutual aid to one based on essentially self-interested voluntary exchange. They reject involvement in political institutions, and support civil disobedience action against the state, and on occasion, political violence. Anarchist movements, most prevalent in Europe in the second half of the 19th and early-20th century, virtually died out apart from fringe groups after the Spanish Civil War.<sup>539</sup>

Another attempt aimed at institutionalizing social and economic justice, in the absence of socially conscious Muslims reading and understanding this Qur'an, was Marxism. This represents a body of social and political thought informed by the writings of Karl Marx.<sup>540</sup> It is essentially a critical analysis of capitalist society, contending that such societies are subject to crises that create the conditions for proletarian revolutions and the transformation to socialism. Much of Marx's writing, especially *Das Kapital*, was concerned with the economic dynamics of capitalist societies, seeing the state as an instrument of class rule supporting private capital and suppressing the masses. Because of private capital's need to

earn profits or extract surplus value, wages have to be kept to a subsistence minimum. This produces economic contradictions, because it restricts the purchasing power of workers to consume the goods they produce. Capitalism is, therefore, inherently unstable, being subject to crises of booms and busts. Marx's view was that these crises would become increasingly worse, and eventually lead to revolution, whereby the working class would seize the state and establish a dictatorship of the proletariat, productive power would be in public hands, and class differences would disappear. This intermediate outcome is what he called socialism. Subsequently, the classless society would eventually lead to the withering away of the state, producing a communist society.

Marxism has sought to extend this method of analysis to contemporary conditions. In particular, Western Marxism has examined the ability of state intervention to smooth out the crises of capitalism and establish a legitimacy for the existing capitalist order through its control over education and the media. In non-industrialized societies, Marxism has been adapted to account for revolution in countries where there is no extensive development of capitalism, in contrast to Marx's view of history. It is generally recognized in the secular West that Marx's writings regarding the transformation to socialism and the nature of socialism lacked detail. In consequence, the conceptual model of Marxism has been subjected to a wide range of interpretations.

An offshoot of the Marxist attempt to fill the vacuum in world affairs — an attempt to bring about social justice — is called Marxism-Leninism. This is a distinct variant of Marxism formulated by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, who prior to the Bolshevik Revolution argued for direct rule by workers and peasants, and advocated direct democracy through the soviets (councils).<sup>541</sup> In practice, the Bolshevik Revolution did not produce a democratic republic, but gave a "leading and directing" role to the party, seen as the vanguard of a working class that had insufficient political consciousness to forge a revolution; such a well-organized and disciplined party, operating according to the principles of democratic centralism, would be able to exploit the revolutionary situation. Leninist principles of a rev-

olutionary vanguard became the central tenet of all communist parties, which were duly organized on the postulation of a democratic centralism that affords the leadership, on the grounds of its revolutionary insight, the right to dictate party policy, to select party officials from above, and to discipline dissenting party members.

Lenin modified Marx's theory of historical materialism, contending that revolutionary opportunities should be seized when they arose, and not when the social and economic conditions of capitalist crisis leading to proletarian revolution existed. He also developed a theory characterizing imperialism as the last stage of a decaying capitalism. This was used to justify revolution in feudal Russia, because it was an imperial power, and since then to justify communist intervention in underdeveloped countries as part of the struggle between socialism and imperialism.

In another part of the world, the Chinese, in the process of throwing off the yoke of British colonialism, pursued their own flavor of social and economic justice through a model that came to be known as Maoism. Specifically, it is the thought of Mao Zedong, and more broadly a revolutionary ideology based on Marxism-Leninism adapted to Chinese conditions.<sup>542</sup> Maoism shifted the focus of revolutionary struggle from the urban workers or proletariat to the countryside and the peasantry. Three main elements defined Maoism: strict Leninist principles of organization, Chinese tradition, and armed struggle as a form of revolutionary activity. Mao gained political power in 1949 through a peasant army, his slogan being "Political power grows through the barrel of a gun."

While there were attempts to take account of the views of the masses, the Chinese Communist Party was organized along strict centralist, hierarchical lines, and increasingly became a vehicle for personal dictatorship. In domestic policy, Mao instituted a radical and far-reaching program to transform traditional Chinese society and economy, using thought reform indoctrination, and the psychological transformation of the masses. Maoism was regarded in the 1960s at the height of the Cultural Revolution as a highly radical form of Marxism-Leninism that was distinct from the bureaucratic repression of the Soviet Union, and had a strong appeal



among the New Left. Since his death, Mao's use of the masses for political purposes, his economic reforms, and his conception of political power have been increasingly criticized inside and outside China as seriously misguided and too rigid.

The human condition, human experience, and human quest for justice sports a yet longer list of attempts that seek equity and justice. Among them, a bit more obscure than the ones cited above, was a 1960s phenomenon called the New Left. This was a neo-Marxist movement that espoused a more libertarian form of socialism compared to orthodox Marxism. In part, it was inspired by the earlier writings of Marx, which were essentially humanistic, and the ideas of Italian politician Antonio Gramsci regarding the importance of ideological hegemony.<sup>543</sup> It also drew on dialectical sociology and radical forms of existentialism. It is, however, difficult to pinpoint any central ideas specific to the New Left. The movement had some influence in the 1960s, particularly in student politics and in opposition to the Vietnam War, but it never became an effectively organized political force.

Its importance declined, and it gave way in part to the New Right. This New Right is a wide-ranging ideological movement associated with the revival of conservatism in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly in the UK and the US. Its ideas are most prominently connected with classical liberal economic theory from the 19th century, and hence it is strongly in favor of state withdrawal from ownership and intervention in the economy in favor of a free-enterprise system. The New Right platform is also bound to a strong moral conservatism — an emphasis on respect for authority, combined with a forceful public expression of patriotism and support for the idea of family. Politically, the New Right adopts an aggressive style that places weight on pursuing convictions rather than on generating a consensus. In the US, in the 1980s, it was associated with the emergence of Christian fundamentalism, for example, the Moral Majority.<sup>544</sup>

*Reformism* is one of the many misguided and feeble human attempts at securing social justice and equity. This type of movement advocates gradual social and political change rather than rev-

olutionary change, most commonly applied to socialism. The underlying premise is that democratic procedures provide the most suitable means through which social change and social justice can be brought about. Counter to reformism is, of course, *revolution*, not just as a means of social and political change, but as an ideology in and of itself. Revolutions erupted in the past 200–300 years to address the lingering issue of broad-based injustice in society. The major revolutions (French, American, Bolshevik) were characterized by a change in regime followed by a major reconstitution of the political, social, and economic order. The emphasis was on complete change, though continuities have been a feature of almost all major revolutions. This is most notable in Marxism, which not only advocates social and political change by revolution, but also how revolution comes about. Revolutions are normally viewed as involving violent overthrow and the use of force, but this is not a necessary condition. In this respect, it can be distinguished from the sudden overthrow of a ruler by force in a coup d'état.

One more expression of the popular social conscience as an attempt at assuring access to equity and justice is the concept of *social democracy*. This section of the socialist movement, which emerged in the late-19th century after the breakup of the First International, advocates achieving social change through reformist rather than revolutionary means.<sup>545</sup> Social democrats accept and work through existing state structures, although such movements may contain radical left-wing sections. Some political parties that have adopted the social democratic label in the latter part of the 20th century are, as they turned out, moderate centrist parties.

Finally, insofar as this short historical review is concerned, the last of the failed human ideological formulations that gained a measure of popular political support in an effort to address social injustice was *syndicalism*. This was a revolutionary socialist doctrine that put emphasis on workers taking power by seizing the factories in which they worked; it developed in the 1890s, and was common in France, Italy, and Spain in the early-20th century. According to the syndicalist doctrine, the state would be replaced by worker-controlled units of production. Often a general strike

was advocated as part of the strategy. By 1914, it had lost its political force. The name, deriving from *syndicat* (French for *trade union*), has also been applied to various non-revolutionary doctrines advocating worker control.

This is what happens when well-intentioned people set out to seek justice in an environment where there is no confidence, light, and general program that comes from the Maker of mankind and that guides the transformation from social injustice to social justice. It is astonishing to see how materialists, atheists, and God-deniers rush to claim the mantle of social and economic justice in the world and at the same time watch the Muslims sit back, read the Qur'an, and not be moved to this end.

Muslims grounded in the profound and timely meanings of this *āyah* should be able to look at this quixotic, often utopian, human experience and experimentation, and realize that non-Muslims had to step up to the plate and try to do their best because the Muslims themselves lacked the initiative and sacrifice to fix firmly the balance of economic, social, and judicial justice in the lives of all peoples. Committed, devout, and sincere Muslims who are reading the Qur'an should have no problem in surpassing these human, albeit atheistic, attempts at achieving social justice because the very existence of these errant ideological theses highlights the absence of the interaction between the Muslims and this Book of *qisṭ* and *'adl* (equity and justice).

### Nationalism and Classism Subvert Human Yearning for Justice

O you who are securely committed [to Allah]! Be ever vigorous in standing up for equity, bearing witness to the truth for the sake of Allah, even though it be against your own selves or your parents or kinsfolk. Whether the party concerned be rich or poor, Allah's claim takes precedence over [the claims of] either of them... (4:135).

For equity to become a fact of life, there has to be an absence of oppression and tyranny in the course of social interaction from family relations to international relations. However, a conscious look at today's world reveals that it is riddled with inconsistencies, bias, and unfairness in almost all walks of life. Entire populations are complaining because of injustice; their grievances go nowhere except to the dead-end religious temples of God and the band-aid remedies of secular international organizations. Flagrant inequity, especially from the exercise of power by governments, has become the norm; yet Muslims who read these *āyāt* are not moved to do something about it! The responsibility of nonpartisan justice beckons the Muslims to do something about a world that has settled into the legalization of injustice and criminalization of those who want to take action to change this disorder.

In the pursuit of justice, per this *āyah*, there is no differentiation between a Muslim and a non-Muslim, or between he who is "strange" or he who is familiar. Unfortunately though, it so happens that when some people acquire power, they show a favorable bias toward their own circle of interests, family, friends, and any extended interest group they may belong to. People in power, even those who obtained power to address a social and economic grievance, show a pattern of giving political appointments or promotions to relatives or people belonging to a common race or nationality.

The course of social and judicial justice also runs into "class" considerations. It is an undeniable fact of life that people in power favor people with money. The standards of justice are disregarded when there is an obvious distance between one person or party that is rich and the other that is poor. This is a real problem. It dwells in courts, tribunals, and any assembly that conducts judicial business. Allah (ﷻ) is penetrating Muslim minds and hearts to illustrate by these delicate words that justice has to take its course whether the persons and parties involved are friends or foes, intimates or strangers, or rich or poor.

Justice cannot be tied down to any of these inconsequential accounts and incidental descriptions. These words need to resound in the heads of decision makers and magistrates, **"Always be vehe-**

**ment in standing up for equity...**" When it comes to justice and equity, human beings are dealing with Allah (ﷻ) and not with the financial clout of a client, the compensation of a customer, or the comparison between who is going to serve "my" interest as a judge more than the other. Justice and fairness are expected of man when he lives in Allah's (ﷻ) presence; and this justice has to be pronounced even if that means he demonstrates the guilt of his own, be it his parents or close family intimates.

The priority of social and judicial justice as outlined by Allah (ﷻ) would require man to break from his family passions and his "class preferences." There is that strong undercurrent in human nature to favor one of your own or to favor someone who has money and power. The centrality of justice in human life places man at a distance from this strong emotional undercurrent. He is expected to be impartial and firm in the pursuit of social, economic, and judicial justice.

In moving outside the domain that encompasses the personal understanding of "self," these *āyāt* draw the reader's attention to social selves that express their behavior in the form of nations and classes. There can certainly be abortive justice should the claimants and their civil officers trip over their own nationalism — the feeling and movement that consciously aims to press together a nation, create a state, or break away from "foreign" people or "incompatible" communities. Nationalist movements became a potent factor in European politics during the 19th century; since 1900, nationalism has become a powerful force in Asia and Africa and in the 1980s it came back formidably in Eastern Europe. Stimulated by the French Revolution, movements arose in the 19th century in favor of national unification in Germany and Italy and national independence in Ireland, Italy, Belgium, Hungary, Bohemia, Poland, Finland, and the Balkan states. Revival of interest in the national language, history, traditions, and culture has accompanied and influenced most political movements.

In political terms, nationalism can be pursued as an ideology that stresses the superiority of a nation and its inhabitants in comparison to other nations and peoples. Most countries take this kind

of nationalism for granted, and wish to demonstrate their national pride. There may be a benign expression of nationalism illustrated by social and psychological forces integrating together on the basis of a particular people's "unique" culture and historical factors. This may provide a degree of cohesion to a given people through a sense of belonging and of sharing certain values. Nonetheless, even though nationalism may bind together people who possess common cultural, linguistic, racial, historical, or geographical characteristics and experiences, when that is "ideologized" and pronounced as a loyalty to a man-made political or social program, then nationalism transcends social assimilation of a people to probable political aggression against the "other." At its self-perceived power peak, nationalism does produce dangerous regimes and political systems, such as fascist Italy of the 1930s or Zionist Israel today. This means that nationalism is a serious obstacle to socio-economic justice because it interferes with the emotional and legal equality of all human beings.

Contemporary nationalism, which has infected the Muslim world since the end of formal colonial occupation, began to make its appearance as a major political and ideological force in the early-19th century, particularly in Napoleonic France. Nationalism is blandished by its twin core elements of ethnocentrism — the belief in the superiority of one's own group and culture — and xenophobia — the exaggerated fear or distrust of foreigners and of the policies and objectives of other national communities.

The spirit of nationalism subjects people to the intangible forces of group psychology and collective behavior, especially when a crisis confronts them with a real or imaginary enemy. It emphasizes the separateness of and differences between groups and societies, such as French versus Germans or Hebrews (Israelis) versus Arabians (Palestinians). Most modern wars have been the products of extreme and not-so-extreme nationalism in which mass emotional enthusiasm has been marshaled for one nation against another. It has played a significant role in the march to secular independence of numerous nationalities. While nationalism has waned to some extent in the region it originated, Europe, it is still waxing strong in areas of Asia and Africa. In some cases, national-

ism may be a formidable internal force that helps produce coherency, loyalty, and long-acting political, economic, and legal institutions. But, of primary concern to Muslims, the prejudice, discrimination, and aggression that are inherent in the internal thoughts and deep feelings of nationalists violate the Qur'anic standards and norms of justice, equality, and equity.

Like nationalism, socio-economic class status also plays a detrimental role in the pursuit of equity and fairness. The affluent nations of the world have a lock on the courts of justice, even as the earth's poor peoples go on living in ghettos, surviving on crumbs, and complaining about this with little expectation of redress. The world is set up to play and pander to the wealthy and those who have "connections." Concerned parties who are either poor or have little influence have no standing in the rubric of today's wild world.

The Qur'an is leading the committed Muslims to positions of impartiality: they have to be detached from their families for the purpose of justice, they are required to be disinterested in their worldly investments for the cause of justice, and they are called upon to weigh both opposing views in a court of law without prejudice and predetermination. We Muslims who breath this Qur'an are on a mission of transnational justice and class-crossing equality. We will not be empathetic to the rich because they are rich and we will not ride roughshod over a poor person because he is poor. In our quest for a just world we know better than to succumb to our internal "interest" instinct, **"Do not, then, follow your own irrational motive, lest you digress from justice."**

There may be some people that the Muslims have little affection for, but even these who may not be well-regarded cannot diminish or damage the Islamic drive for justice, as practiced by committed Muslims. Obviously, since the Muslims are commanded to set their sights on global justice, there will be establishments, governments, lobbies, interest groups, ethnocentric jingoists, and alliances of people who will run afoul of this high standard of impartial judgements. But none of these can cause *al-ladhīna āmanū* to change course,

**O you who have pledged a commitment to Allah! Be ever steadfast in your devotion to Allah, bearing witness to the truth in all equity; and never let hatred of anyone lead you into the sin of deviating from justice... (5:8).**

In the secular and imperial West, complex legal tricks are deployed in the justice “industry.” Jurists, justices, and magistrates have a way of bending the law to serve certain material purposes or financial windfalls. Had the justice system been working efficiently and properly in the power hemisphere of the world — that is, without the underlying concept of the “national interest” and the class discrimination so obviously present — would it be possible to have the type of world that has lost its sense of justice? In light of this *āyah*, where are the people (Muslims) who are able to break out of their sense of nationalism and their class status so as to be fair and evenhanded to the issues that have tipped the balance of justice to favor those who belong to a race, a nationalism, or an elite stratum of society? The last serious attempt at that failed because it was not rooted in this Qur’an; it did not have a relationship with God. Therefore, socialism and communism turned out to be just another one of those misguided crusades for social justice, **“For if you distort or ignore [the truth about justice], behold, Allah is indeed aware of all that you do!”**

Within the context of the unrivaled Islamic model, consider the following example of how the awareness of justice was embedded in the social conscience of the Muslims around Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ). It is reported that ‘Abdullāh ibn Rawāḥah was dispatched by the Prophet (ﷺ) to go to Khaybar to collect half the agricultural produce of the year; this was in fulfillment of the mutual agreement between the Yahūd there and the Islamic State in Madinah.<sup>546</sup> The Yahūd tried to bribe Ibn Rawāḥah so that he may be lenient on them and reduce the amount of produce he was charged to take back to Madinah. When the Qur’an-centered Ibn Rawāḥah sensed what these Yahūdī suborners were up to as they offered a payment in exchange for favors, he said,



“By Allah! I have come to you from the dearest person [known] to me [that is, Muhammad]. And you [the Yahūd], I hate more than your equivalent numbers in tricksters and materialists. But my love for him [Muhammad] and my intense dislike for you will never cause me to fail to behave justly with you.” They [the Yahūd] answered, “It is on this [principle] that heaven and earth have operated.”<sup>547</sup>

Today’s Muslims cannot afford to be fooled by the ornate court buildings and elaborate judicial systems that are all over the modern world. Despite their fancy facades attended by images of a blindfolded Lady Justice holding a scale, these places have not been able to deliver justice. It takes the transparent and sensitive conscience that comes through absorbing the meanings in this Qur’an to produce global justice — across the board and without a shred of unfair treatment or a trace of nepotism. The world has no need for Athenian courtyards; it would be much better off with this Muhammadi perspicaciousness and sound judgment.

The next *āyah* speaks directly to the condition of Muslims today. The issue of justice or their own dereliction of duty in nurturing its institutional presence has placed the Muslims back at square one,

**O you who have committed yourselves [to Allah]! Rededicate yourselves to Allah and His Apostle, and to the divine Writ that He has bestowed from on high upon His Apostle, step by step, as well as to the revelation that He sent down in times past: for he who denies Allah, and His angels, and His revelations, and His apostles, and the Last Day, has indeed gone far astray (4:136).**

The whole world has gone through a social rotation from a pre-Islamic *jāhiliyah* in the days prior to the first commitment of Muslims around Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) to a latter-day, modern *jāhiliyah* in

which that initial commitment has ceased to be felt in its sphere of justice. So the task is once again left up to the committed Muslims to dedicate anew the fulfilment of their pledge to Allah (ﷻ) so as to imbue the earth with the justice that is in heaven — and in our time and day. On this renewal of the palpable effects of *imān*, Allah (ﷻ) says, **“Rededicate yourselves to Allah and His Apostle, and to the divine Writ that He has bestowed from on high upon His Apostle, step by step...”** The Muslims are going to have to pick up the pieces of history and reignite this *imān* in its sphere of influence so that justice, which has eluded the peoples of the world for centuries, can once again adjudicate their affairs. This Qur’an and the living example of Muhammad (ﷺ) are what the Muslims have going for them. They cannot feel truth-deprived when they can easily avail this eternal true statement — the Qur’an— and its enduring embodiment — Muhammad (ﷺ). They do not have to repeat their failures as a human society to realize that all attempts at disseminating justice in a state that denies Allah (ﷻ), His angels, His scriptures, His Apostles (ﷺ), and the Last Day are doomed to inadequacy and breakdown.

The above examples of socialism, social democracy, communism, reformism, etc., are revelatory of those who, in denial of the relationship with Allah (ﷻ) for the cause of justice, seek to obtain justice in this isolation only to wind up losing and regretting. They have surely gone off the path of providence and prosperity. And it now appears that those who broke from Allah (ﷻ) and are looking for justice while alienated from Him will have no qualifications to bring justice to human society — as hard as they may try and as “sincere” as they may be. History is full of examples that authenticate how human beings arrive at a dead end when they fail to embrace Allah (ﷻ) as their guide.

### **Munāfiqs Look for Honor from the Kāfirs**

While the Muslims of today have not really been focused on a destructive class of people in their own society, the Qur'an continues to "pound" the matter into their minds. Eventually, they will appreciate how pertinent this information is, given the importance of keeping a keen eye on traitors in their midst who are willing to cooperate with enemy forces. And so — again — He says,

**Behold, as for those who commit [to Allah], and then deny Him, and again express commitment to Allah and again deny Him, and thereafter become stubborn in their God-denial — Allah will not forgive them, nor will He guide them in any way (4:137).**

God-denial (*kufr*) prior to the affirmation of God is understandable — not acceptable, but understandable. There may be societies that have spent generations incrementally deviating from God until they eventually reached a point of rejecting Him. But once this denial is countermanded by adherence to Allah (ﷻ), there can be no excuse for returning, in one lifetime and in one abrupt about-face from the truth, to a state of refusing and denying God all over again. *Kufr* is the opposite of *īmān* and contrary to it. It cannot manifest itself with *īmān* at the same time. The outward demonstration of *kufr* may be subdued in a person who pretends to be a Muslim, but his conviction thoroughly endorses the denial of Allah (ﷻ) and His power. This *āyah* serves notice that there are actually people who follow their assertion of Allah (ﷻ) with a refutation of Him. And to complicate things even more, they repeat the same behavior — confirmation of Allah (ﷻ) followed by renunciation — all over again. This back-and-forth between being with Allah (ﷻ) and turning against Him ends up escalating the intensity of *kufr*, with the result that **"...Allah will not forgive them, nor will He guide them in any way."**

When a person pledges his allegiance to Allah (ﷻ) he does so in a manner that liberates him from the mindset and the ideals of *jāhiliyah*. Hence, no longer do commercial priorities, financial

precedence, and material preferences tug at his mind and conscience. If a person does not embrace Allah (ﷻ) with his whole self and soul he will be unable to soar over earthly assets and profit enticements. Greed turning into ambition will take him in directions at conflict with Allah (ﷻ). The pledge of commitment to Allah (ﷻ) is the only psychological fact that is able to remake a person in the image of this Qur'an. But if a person is not saturated with this assurance and mandate, he will express himself in hypocritical terms.

People who go from *īmān* to *kufr* and back, again and again, are phoney. This is another one of the defining features of a class of *munāfiqs*. In a sense, *nifāq* is the failure of the human will to stand up for truth and justice against tyranny and perjury. A commitment to Allah (ﷻ) will take its bearer to Allah (ﷻ) even through circumstances that court death. But a superficial commitment to Allah (ﷻ) will atrophy into a form of timidity or cowardice that comes from misplaced fear — the individual has more fear of Allah's (ﷻ) inferiors than of Allah (ﷻ) Himself — and grounded greed. The rest of this *sūrah* is dedicated to exposing these types of treacherous people,

**Announce [O Muhammad] to such traitors [who renege on their commitment to Allah] that afflictive suffering awaits them. As for those who take the deniers of Allah [and His power] for their allies in preference to the committed Muslims, do they hope to be honored by them when, behold, all honor belongs to Allah [alone]?**

And, indeed, He has enjoined upon you in this divine Writ that whenever you hear people deny the involvement of Allah [in human/social affairs] and mock at this [involvement], you shall avoid their company until they begin to talk of other things — or else, in truth, you will become like them. In fact, Allah will combine the *munāfiqs* and the *kāfirs* in Hell altogether. They bide their time: thus, if triumph comes to you from Allah, they say, “Were we not on your side?”

whereas if those *kāfirs* are in luck, they say [to them], “Have we not earned your affection by defending you against those committed Muslims?” But Allah will judge between you all on the Day of Resurrection; and never will Allah allow those who deny the truth to get the better of the committed Muslims.

Behold, the *munāfiqs* attempt to deceive Allah — the while it is He who caused them to be deceived [by themselves]. And when they rise to a [methodical] prayer, they rise reluctantly, only to be seen and praised by men; seldom is Allah in their conscience. Vacillating between this and that, [true] neither to these nor those. But for him whom Allah lets go astray you can never find any way [out] (4:138–143).

The first word in this deterrent lesson is *bashshir*, an imperative that means *break the good news*. But “grievous suffering” can never be good news. The combination of this seemingly contradictory phrasing corresponds to the contradictory psychology of the *munāfiqs*. Announcing good news corresponds to their outward Islam in this world; and grievous suffering corresponds to their true selves in the world to come. They want to try to “corner Allah (ﷻ)” with their behavior, but it is He who has them cornered in the way he rightfully and accurately addresses them. The reason this distressing agony awaits them in the life-to-follow is because they had aligned themselves, their lives, and their essence with the *kāfirs* to the exclusion of the covenant- and commitment-bearing Muslims. These “Muslims” of shredded allegiance never really placed their lifelong trust in Allah (ﷻ). Their expectations of Allah (ﷻ) were material and immediate. Besides that, their perception of Allah’s (ﷻ) glory and power were always self-serving and grudging. Allah (ﷻ), to them, never really was the source of resplendence and the reference of prominence,

**Break the good news to the *munāfiqs*: they really shall have a scathing affliction. These [*munāfiqs*] are the**

ones who ally themselves with the *kāfirs* in exclusion to the committed Muslims. Are they [the *munāfiqs*] seeking dignity in the company of the *kāfirs*? Behold, absolutely, dignity is Allah's.

This *āyah*, when added to the other numerous *āyāt* about the *munāfiqs*, intensifies the fact that there are false “Muslims” who exercise their daily rituals and pay lip service to a ceremonial Islam, but beneath all this harbor an essence that violates the heart and the spirit of Islam. This *āyah*, and others throughout this Qur'an, discloses the reality of these types: their thinking and vision of the way things ought to be are with the *kāfirs*. Their physical presence is with the Muslims but their psychological presence is with the *kāfirs*. They share rituals with the Muslims but they share feelings of allegiance with the *kāfirs*. These *kāfirs* represent all types of political and ideological opponents of Allah (ﷻ), His Prophet (ﷺ), and the bloc of committed Muslims. During the time of Allah's Prophet (ﷺ), when these *āyāt* were being unfurled, the band of people expressing ideological and political opposition to the Qur'an, the Prophet (ﷺ) and the committed Muslims were the Yahūd (the concentrated socio-economic power of Jews). There are many references in the Qur'an to the fact that people of scripture may atrophy into opponents or deniers of Allah (ﷻ). The words, “*Inna al-ladhīna kafarū min ahl al-kitāb...: In fact, those deniers [of Allah] from among people of scripture...*” (98:6), refers to this fact. Yes, there are Jewish *kāfirs*, Christian *kāfirs*, and to be frank, Muslim *kāfirs*. In the literal sense, all of these are obviously oxymorons; however, the world sometimes has its contradiction in terms and this is an area that has to be well thought out by the enlightened students of scripture before they all succumb to ignorance and fatal misunderstandings. There is reason to believe that the *kāfirs* cited in this *āyah* are the Yahūd because many ostensible Muslims (*munāfiqs*) flocked to them and found comfortable company in their “inferior-superior” relationship. These encounters, many times, were cunning and guarded. What went on in private conferences between the *munāfiqs* and the Yahūd could only revolve around

how to dilute the ideological ascendancy of Islam and to undermine the central leadership role of Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) in the new Islamic society.

The inescapable question raised by this *āyah* is: how is it possible for such professed Muslims — the *munāfiqs* — to subordinate themselves to the *kāfirs*, to advocate two contradictory positions, and then to emerge claiming they are faithful, ardent, and committed Muslims? Why do people who potentially have the honor of *īmān* want to look for self-esteem among the enemies of Allah (ﷻ)? Are they looking for self-regard and power among the secular *kāfirs* and the religious *kāfirs*? The established fact of history, human nature, and heavenly information is that honor, dignity, and glory belong to Allah (ﷻ) and all who identify with Him, relate to Him, and are inspired by Him.

There are many scenarios that bring the meaning of these *āyāt* to life. The world, which was once Islamic in its ideological and political composition, presents an array of facts that sparkle with the meanings of these *āyāt*. And none of these, with the meticulous understanding of the Qur'an and Sunnah, could be more illustrative of scriptural descriptions than the current Saudi rulers of Makkah and Madinah.

The relationship between the apparent Muslims who govern Arabia, the birthplace of Muhammad (ﷺ) and the cradle of Islam, and the obvious enemies of Islam who govern in Washington is one of the best real-life examples of the information contained in these *āyāt*. The Saudi rulers go through the mechanics of Islam; they perform their rituals — some of them do this to perfection. Insofar as the habits of Islam they display them without a shadow of a doubt. But when it comes to their fealty and loyalty, they are of imperialist quality and Zionist substance. They prove this not by their superficial religious character but by their concrete political decisions and by how they run to the US and Israel for cover whenever profound Muslims raise their voices and hands for the independence and unity of the Muslim world.

During the Reagan-Bush presidency (1981–1988) in the United States, the Saudi inferiors were faithfully observant of their

lower rank and subservient status to their *kāfir* superiors. The Saudi Arabian government was digging deep into its budget to support imperialist and Zionist causes from Latin America to littoral Asia. If the US authorities demanded something from the Saudis, the Saudis were too happy to oblige. Prince Bandar ibn Sultan, then the Saudi ambassador to the US, also known in some circles as “Bandar Bush,” in incident after incident and time after time, revealed his *nifāq* credentials.<sup>548</sup> This *alpha-munāfiq* was a prime example of outward religiosity and inner *kufr*. His religious public persona (or front) was propped up by check-writing cronies who would selectively shower certain Islamic centers in the United States with \$10,000, or even \$100,000, as an act of magnanimity from the government of “His Highness.” And the broken-spirit Muslims, who succumbed to this Saudi noblesse oblige, would bow their heads in appreciation for the generosity of the holy family in the holy kingdom!

To take one distinct event during those years of dual Bandar loyalty, back in the early- and mid-1980s, when the Islamic organizations in the United States were at the command of the royal *munāfiqs*, Prince Bandar on June 22, 1984 agreed with Bud McFarlane that the Saudi government would give \$1 million/month to the Contras who were a US-backed, CIA-trained, paramilitary insurgency against the elected Sandanista government in Nicaragua.<sup>549</sup> Bandar also deposited \$8 million dollars in a Swiss bank account for the Contras, so as to avoid any “legal” and regulatory obstacles for depositing such funds in US banks, and to allow his *kāfir* patrons the cover of plausible deniability. Eventually the total amount forked over by the inferior Muslims to their *kāfir* superiors to support capitalist and corporate intrigue in Latin America against the Sandinistas reached \$32 million.

This is only one little episode in some “out-of-the-way” part of the world, but the picture becomes more gruesome and more revealing when these same Saudi “Muslim” inferiors got involved big time with the imperialist-Zionist machinations against the leadership of the Islamic State in Iran in its formative birth years. The imperialist US regime put Bandar to use in facilitating Saddam



Hussein's participation as the Western-Zionist spearhead against Islamic Iran.<sup>550</sup> It was Bandar who conveyed to the US administration the willingness of Saddam Hussein to take on his Islamic Iranian neighbor. The Reagan administration pressured its *munāfiq* underlings Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Egypt to deliver US weapons to Iraq; included among these weapons were bombs of all sorts, helicopters, howitzers, the wherewithal to produce chemical and biological weapons, and other lethal gadgets.

Saddam Hussein himself also carries the dubious distinction of *nifāq*. US patronage of Saddam can be traced all the way back to 1959, when the CIA hired the then 22-year-old to assassinate Iraqi Prime Minister General 'Abd al-Karīm Qāsim.<sup>551</sup> Saddam fired too soon, however, killing Qāsim's driver and only wounding the prime minister. In the ensuing two decades, the CIA coddled and coached a man they considered to be a cutthroat and a thug, but at least he was their thug, their secure *munāfiq* — one who could be counted on to fight America's enemies in the Muslim East. In 1963, the CIA officers in Baghdad provided Saddam with lists of "communists" (code word for American rivals to power or those who sincerely wanted to represent their own people), whom he promptly assassinated.

In 1979, the year of the Islamic triumph in Iran, Saddam assumed the top executive position in the Iraqi government, inaugurating his rule by purging his political opponents with a succession of show trials and brutal executions that were meant to instil fear in the populace and terrorize any potential rivals. In September 1980, thinking that the committed Muslims in Iran under the leadership of Imam Khomeini are inferior and the imperialist-Zionist axis is superior (typical *munāfiq* psychology), he invaded the one true consolidation of Muslims who were trying their best to commit their state of affairs to Allah (ﷻ).<sup>552</sup> Saddam, with assurances from executives in Washington to royals in Riyadh, was hoping at the very least to cripple the Islamic Revolution in Iran and, in the best of imperialist-Zionist and Arab nationalist scenarios, to destroy it altogether. All of this he did on behalf of his *kāfir* seniors. This *munāfiq* garnered the support of his *munāfiq* kin from almost all the

Arabian countries including Saudi Arabia, who themselves were collectively maintained by the United States, the Soviet Union, and most European states. And to what end? Twenty years after he invaded Islamic Iran on behalf of Arabian, American, and Israeli ‘*aṣabīyah*’, Saddam’s country was occupied by his “supporters” and he himself was hanged by his patrons,

**Announce [O Muhammad] to such traitors [who renege on their commitment to Allah] that afflictive suffering awaits them. As for those who take the deniers of Allah [and His power] for their allies in preference to the committed Muslims, do they hope to be honored by them when, behold, all honor belongs to Allah [alone]? (4:138–139).**

In the time of Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) the *munāfiqs* were never in the seats of power. But in today’s world, that is where they are. The imperialist American obsession at the time was to rally its *munāfiq* allies in the region to obstruct, overwhelm, and overturn Islam in Iran and beyond. The leadership of Imam Khomeini had repercussions throughout the Arabian lands, reverberations around the Muslim world, and feelings of approval and accommodation in the oppressed parts of the world. The appeal of Islamic leadership, self-confidence, and self-determination extended beyond geographical Iran and historical Shi’ism. The *munāfiq* underlings of *kufr* were panicking, and the wealthy ones had to do something about it. Being the cowards they are, these *munāfiqs*, primarily the family firm of Saud, went on a shopping spree in the market of Islamic activities. This house of *nifāq* bankrolled eight years of war against Islamic Iran. It did so because, in its psychological core, it had no confidence in Allah (ﷻ), His Prophet (ﷺ), and the pool of committed Muslims around. It misplaced its confidence and sought solace, refuge, protection, and prestige from immoral imperialists and evil Zionists.

This compact, but not so trivial, review of events, focussing narrowly on just one case, illustrates clearly how some so-called Muslims are in fact opponents and diehard assailants of committed

Muslims. We Muslims are compelled to refresh our understanding of these *āyāt*. We have to take these meanings into the facts of life and not just look at them as if they are suspended between an abstract that belongs to our imagination and a reality from which we are withdrawn. Let us openly face the reality presented in the niche of these *āyāt*: there are “Muslims” who trust in human military power and do not trust in divinely calculated power. There are “Muslims” who would rather be favored by *kāfir* presidents than by Allah (ﷻ), His Prophet (ﷺ), and the committed Muslims.

The first visual representation of a *munāfiq* is his subservience to the *kāfirs*. Muslims cross the line into *kufr* when they psychologically and ideologically bind with the *kāfirs*. When that happens, the religious and ceremonial routine of these cowering recreants cannot vouch for or hide their true identities. Another hint into a *munāfiq*'s constitution is his mistaken and misplaced concept of power. A *munāfiq* believes that *kāfirs* have power and force, glory and bravado. The fact of the matter, as the Qur'an teaches from Allah (ﷻ), is that the *kāfirs* have none of that. Therefore, the *munāfiqs* can obtain none of it from them.

*Izzah* and *quwwah* (pride and power) belong absolutely and unconditionally to Allah (ﷻ). If anyone wants access to pride and power, he should know where he can get them from. He should be on Allah's (ﷻ) side; short of that, he will learn that his destiny is anything but glorious and mighty. Conforming to Allah (ﷻ) brings all these fringe benefits with it. Man does not conform to Allah (ﷻ) for his selfish interest; rather, he conforms to Him because he is aware and sensitive to who Allah (ﷻ) is and to who man is. This is a natural conformity, a spontaneous conformity, and a lifelong conformity. Otherwise, man will subordinate himself to false powers and illusional glory. There are many sources and channels of influence that he may succumb to in his abandonment of Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ). Man can become a slave to his desires, to his wealth, to profit making, to market forces, to corporate wealth, to sexual perversions, and to an indefinite amount of attractions; and if he chooses to do that he would, without doubt, have violated his relationship with Allah (ﷻ). And he cannot

have it both ways: either he conforms to Allah (ﷻ) or he caves in to his lusts, cravings, and false ideas.

It is impossible for a committed Muslim to look for honor, dignity, power, and protection elsewhere besides Allah (ﷻ). In fact, one cannot claim to be a committed Muslim while going around and looking for relief from someone other than Allah (ﷻ) — out of the question. More to the point, a *mu'min* (committed Muslim) will not and cannot try to obtain comfort and support from the enemies of Allah (ﷻ), His Scripture, His Prophet (ﷺ), and His people. The subversion of this fact has been so thorough and so pervasive that some Muslims today have to strain their minds to understand it. It behooves people who are in positions of authority, throughout what used to be an Islamic Ummah, to realize that they are the *munāfiqs* par excellence when they run to Washington for cover, when they sign military pacts and agreements with pro-Zionist governments, and when they feel more comfortable in the company of lustrous *kāfirs* than in the company of Muslim *mujāhids*.

Today's *munāfiqs* in the Muslim world are beyond hope. They have reached the point of no return in their collaboration with the *kāfirs*. It would be, all in all, a waste of time thinking that the corrupt kings and pestilent presidents will take a closer look at this Qur'an and walk with its meanings. Acquiring the meanings of this Qur'an has always been easier for the abject oppressed than for the mighty monarch.

A manifestation of this affinity between apparent Muslims (*munāfiqs*) and *kāfirs* has a historical dimension. There are "Muslims" who identify with pre-Islamic cultures and pre-Islamic power structures. In their psychological leap to power they take pride in their pre-Islamic heritage that has its roots in the "Persian civilization," the "Egyptian civilization," the "Indian civilization," or the other "civilizations" that were, when one thinks about it, modernized *jāhiliyahs*. This break with *kufr* and its power structures has to extend from the internal thoughts of committed Muslims all the way to their external struggle against *kufr*. The Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said, "Whoever identifies with nine ancestral deniers of Allah [*kāfirs*], he is their tenth in the Fire."<sup>553</sup>

### Ridiculing Allah's (ﷻ) Engagement in Social Affairs Is *Nifāq*

So that the committed Muslims have no illusions about who the *munāfiqs* in their midst are, these *āyāt* detail another indicator that can be culled from their public behavior. Hence, when a person claims to be a committed Muslim, but blends into a crowd that mocks Allah (ﷻ) and His power presence in human life and social reality, then such a person is considered to be a *munāfiq*. A committed Muslim cannot countenance the company of people who make fun of Allah (ﷻ).

In an Islamic society there may be people who have opinions that ridicule the involvement of Allah (ﷻ) in the will of man. But a Muslim of divine commitment cannot feel comfortable in their presence. He cannot say that he will share their camaraderie because he believes in forgiving them their errant opinions. He cannot say he will keep company with them because he is outsmarting them, or that this is the way to demonstrate pluralism, freedom of expression, and multiculturalism. This is self-deception. It is another symptom of *nifāq*. The ardor and fervor of *īmān* does not accept such rationalizations. Once this intense feeling of attachment and love for Allah (ﷻ) is gone, a person may find himself well-situated among those who treat Allah (ﷻ) with contempt. When this zeal and fervency leaves a person's heart, anything else may be rationalized in the company of those who deride the fact of Allah's (ﷻ) management in the activities of His human subjects — His *āyāt*. The relationship a *mu'min* has with Allah (ﷻ) is of delight, eagerness, and reverence. Once this devotion wanes, the relationship between the committed Muslim and Allah (ﷻ) becomes weaker, while his relationship with those who lampoon or ridicule Allah (ﷻ) becomes stronger.

The mental and emotional convergence of the *dīn*'s principles with attachment for the *dīn*'s Originator that occurs in a *mu'min* drives him, when and if he hears the *āyāt* of Allah (ﷻ) being laughed at or reviled, either to take issue with those responsible or terminate associating with them. Listening to such nonsense, and tolerating it, is the first step in relinquishing the warm attachment to Allah (ﷻ). This is equivalent to a crossover from *īmān* to *kufr* on a medium of *nifāq*.

In the Islamic society of Madinah there were some Muslims who would be in attendance at the gatherings of prominent *munāfiqs* before their social status tumbled. This Qur'an came to advise these Muslims that passive intermingling in such an accusatory setting is the first step toward defeat, as it amounts to a psychological compromise on social terms inimical to the majesty of Allah (ﷻ). In the course of solidifying this Islamic social order at that early stage there was no explicit order from Allah (ﷻ) to the committed Muslims to boycott or eschew such get-togethers. However, as this Islamic social order matured, the preservation of *imān* demanded of all concerned and committed Muslims to voluntarily shun such rabble. Here are Allah's (ﷻ) words to the wise,

**And, for certain, He has enjoined upon you in this divine Writ that whenever you hear people deny the truth of Allah's engagement [in social affairs] and ridicule this engagement, you shall avoid their company until they begin to talk of other things — or else, verily, you will become like them. For sure, Allah will assemble the *kāfirs* and the *munāfiqs* in Hell, wholly (4:140).**

It is interesting to note in this discussion a previous *āyah* that was imparted in Makkah, “Whenever you [O Muhammad] see those who indulge in [blasphemous] talk about Our engagement [in social affairs], turn away from them until they begin to talk of other things...” (6:68).

This would mean that Muslims who are attached to Allah (ﷻ) shall not mix with those who make fun of God. This is true regardless of whether the scoffing and jeering of God come from *kāfirs* or from *munāfiqs*. The subtext of the *āyah* indicates that in both social systems, the *kāfir* system in Makkah and the Islamic system in Madinah, there were people who would poke fun at Allah (ﷻ). There may have been Muslims who were concealing their commitment to Allah (ﷻ) in Makkah, but even though that was the case, they were still told in the words of the Qur'an to part company with a crowd that demeans Him. What is probably of more sig-

nificance is the fact that the Islamic society and government in Madinah did not ban these people from expressing their internal thoughts, even though these internal thoughts were grossly irreverent toward Allah (ﷻ), and maybe even sacrilegious. Despite this level of “freedom of speech,” the enemies of Islam nowadays — enemies due either to their ignorance or to their knowledge of these facts — are blowing hot and cold air saying that Islam is intolerant, Islam is xenophobic, and Islam is against freedom of expression.

In the first model Islamic society on earth, there were indelicate individuals who were shamelessly expressing their libertine and ungodly opinions, precisely because they were not fearful of an FBI or some other police authority that could haul them away for a legal offense.<sup>554</sup> In a bona fide Islamic state, they would not be permitted to control the media so as to broadcast that type of nonsense, but they would certainly be free to express their opinions, as offensive as they may be, among themselves and in a place accessible to the average Muslim, without being told to “shut up.”

There is a sense of freedom of speech in an Islamic society that is guaranteed by this Qur'an. And the model Islamic society in Madinah set the example for all future Islamic societies in which people are at liberty to express their minds — as contrary as that may be to the ideals and the values of a moral and high-minded Islamic public opinion. This means that bad influence may circulate even in an Islamic society if the Muslims begin to relax the meaning of freedom by relaxing their commitment and love for Allah (ﷻ). In any discussion about freedom, it should be noted that, for many decades running, Muslims have not been able to have, much less express, their own public opinion. That day, when Muslims can freely and publicly express their views, appears to be on the horizon, *al-ḥamdu lillāh*. Finally, Allah (ﷻ) tells those who belong in each other's company, **“Note, Allah will blend the *kāfirs* and the *munāfiqs* together in perdition.”**

Going deeper into *munāfiq* territory to bring more of their traits out into the open, the *āyāt* uncover their ugly character — a hypocritical character that behaves one way toward the committed Muslims but then acts in a totally different way toward the *kāfirs*.

They want to have it both ways — to satisfy God and Satan at the same time,

**They wait in anticipation of what befalls you: thus, if triumph comes to you from Allah, they say, “Were we not on your side?” whereas if the *kāfirs* are in luck, they say [to them], “Have we not earned your affection by defending you against those committed Muslims?” But Allah will judge between you all on the Day of Resurrection, and never will Allah allow those *kāfirs* to break through the lines of the committed Muslims (4:141).**

The resounding words here indicate that these slick “Muslims” (*munāfiqs*) are hell-bent against the committed Muslims. They were looking forward to the time when the tide would turn against Muhammad (ﷺ) and all those with him, and today they do the same thing with the working members of the Islamic movement. Until the day of Muslim failure at the battlefield arrives, these *munāfiqs* do not spare any combination of words to express their outward harmony with the Islamic current. When the Muslims are militarily victorious, these *munāfiqs* come out and say, **“Were we not on your side?”** And this question is not totally and obviously wrong. During the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) in Madinah, there were some *munāfiqs* who actually went all the way to the warfront, but with reluctant attitudes and detracting words. By asking this question, other *munāfiqs* may have meant that their “hearts” were on the side of the bleeding and dying Muslims; that is, they themselves did not have the courage to be in the thick of battle in person, so their “thoughts” were with the combat Muslims, or as some of them justified their non-combatant position, they stayed behind in order to defend the home-front! **“...whereas if the *kāfirs* strike victory, they say [to them], ‘Have we not earned your affection by defending you against those committed Muslims?’”** In a way, these *munāfiqs* were contributing to the *kāfirs*’ war effort by corroding the internal Islamic social fabric and



chipping away at the Islamic fighting morale. And so, these are the *munāfiqs*. They live in multiple personalities and they behave with contradictory attitudes.

The incremental struggle in building an Islamic society put the committed Muslims securely behind the lead of their Prophet (ﷺ) who took a subtle approach and kept a low profile toward what had the potential of becoming a fifth column and a Trojan Horse combined. The public mind and the mainstream behavior of the dedicated Muslims was to refer these types to Allah's (ﷻ) ultimate judgment, **"...but Allah will determine the result between you all on the Day of Resurrection..."** On that day, these allegiance shifters will not be able to plot behind closed doors and to meet behind enemy lines. On that day, their internal thoughts and designs will come to light.

Words of reassurance follow these designations of *nifāq*, making it known that the connection between the *munāfiqs* and the *kāfirs* will not tip the balance of power against the sincere Muslims. The successful conclusion of a war — regardless of battle details — shall be to the Muslims' advantage; that is, the *kāfirs* will not have the upper hand, **"...and never will Allah allow the *kāfirs* to get around the committed Muslims."** This *āyah* states a fact that is demonstrated in this world when the final victory is achieved by the sacrificing Muslims; and it also states a fact in the life approaching when the final judgement will be in favor of the Muslims, with the *kāfirs* scoring zero.

It is obvious that on Accountability Day the balance will tip to the advantage of the Muslims, that is, those who wholeheartedly acquiesced to Allah's (ﷻ) command and authority, and not necessarily those who did a perfunctory performance of five *ṣalāhs* in a day devoid of any other mental convictions. What is not so clear in many minds is how the balance of power and victory are in favor of the covenant-bearing Muslims in this world. Before this is addressed, and as a backdrop, the Muslims have to realize that their commitment to Allah (ﷻ) sustains them through all challenges in life. However, they have to expand this heartfelt commitment to its full range: it has to become a social program, a moral force, and a

disciplined community. And it all has to be for Allah (ﷻ) from A to Z. Once this process begins to reach maturity, the *kāfir* infringement on this course to Allah (ﷻ) will gradually decline until it ceases altogether. This fact has never been historically overturned. It sparkles through all the history of people who have dedicated their struggle for Allah (ﷻ).

Looking at history from this angle, which extends all the way back to the primitive clash between good and evil, it should be clear that committed Muslims have never been vanquished. Still, all this positive history notwithstanding, if there is a psychological, social, or military gap in this relationship and bond with Allah (ﷻ), then, yes at that time, the Muslims will experience setbacks and defeat. The Muslims cannot raise an Islamic banner with materialistic hearts and then expect a resounding victory — or any victory for that matter. It will not happen. An Islamic banner has to be raised with an Islamic determination that is fueled by an Islamic relationship with Allah (ﷻ), which occupies all the chambers in the Muslims' hearts. When that happens and Muslims move on for Allah (ﷻ), they can only expect successful endings.

In the blessed era of Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ) the committed and combat Muslims at Uḥud displayed a tenuous bond with Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) when they abandoned their assigned military positions, disobeying Muhammad (ﷺ) in the process, and rushed to capture the spoils of war. At the Battle of Ḥunayn, the Muslims, being overly impressed with the tactical advantage of their imposing numbers, once again demonstrated a frail relationship with Allah (ﷻ) by thinking that their numerical superiority would carry the day instead of the overriding factor that had brought them to the point where they were viewed to be on par with or superior to their enemy — their attachment to Allah (ﷻ).<sup>555</sup>

In the course of Islamic history this has always been the case: when Muslims who are motivated by their faith go to war lose sight of the fact that they do so in the company of Allah (ﷻ) and with His assistance, they push out this intimate attachment to Allah (ﷻ) with other ideas or feelings of a worldly nature. When that happens these Muslims slip on the scale of success. It never fails.

This “*sunnah*” was in play during the opening chapters of Islam, it was evident during the clashes and wars with anti-Andalusia imperial Europe, it was entwined in the engagement with the Crusades, and it is demonstrated today from the Philippines to Palestine, and from Kosova to Kashmir. What precisely went into the defeat of combat Muslims here and there may never be known, but the bottom line is that when they “loosened” their connection with Allah (ﷻ), they concurrently “tightened” their connection with worldly powers and distractions.

During the course of a protracted struggle by the committed and combat Muslims against *kāfir* militaries and the regimes that commission them, the Muslims may still experience setbacks despite their close-knit relationship with Allah (ﷻ). But this amounts to what is called in Islamic terminology an *ibtīlā'* (trial through tribulation). In this incremental “setback,” sacrificing and dying Muslims are “fine-tuning” their relationship with Allah (ﷻ). In the midst of this *ibtīlā'*, the Muslims do not show a deliberate or premeditated behavior of disobeying Allah (ﷻ); rather it is the frailties of their unrefined human nature that gets the better of them in aberrant moments of vulnerability. What happened to the fighting Muslims at Uḥud is the best expression of this altogether human tendency.<sup>556</sup>

The Muslims need to understand that defeat in the course of an individual battle is not what really counts as defeat. Military outcomes ebb and flow: sometimes you win, while at other times you lose. The overall war, though, is eventually won at the end of protracted armed hostilities. Defeat and destruction at the battlefield are only damaging when they cause psychological submission to the enemy or the sapping of the Muslim spirit. A military fall accompanied by combat frustration remains a surface event so long as it does not penetrate the Islamic society to the extent of causing the Muslim public to feel down, to no longer muster the morale to fight, and to surrender under conditions of capitulation. Any military reversal should stimulate the popular Islamic morale, spark a public mood of resistance, and rekindle the Islamic determination to fight on until justice is done. This obviously feeds into the Islam-

ic will to be with Allah (ﷻ) in which permanently ceasing opposition to injustice is not an option. The more the God-denying enemy batters conscious and committed Muslims, the more determination they should have to strike back as Allah's (ﷻ) humble servants. This is part of what is meant by, **"...and never will Allah allow the *kāfirs* to ride roughshod over the *mu'mins*."** It is the Muslims' God-given and God-driven commitment that will surmount imposed wars, assaults, and aggression by the *kāfirs*. Toward this end, Muslims of commitment need all they can get from their fervent attachment to Allah (ﷻ) and all the unqualified trust in Him to carry the day and win the war. Nothing habitual, traditional, or legalistic is going to substitute for this emotional and practical allegiance to Allah (ﷻ).

Muslims looking for victory will never find the object of their insistence with *kāfir* regimes, *mushrik* militaries, and supercilious superpowers. Regardless of the details of time and place, the Muslims can only find power in being with Allah, and in acquiring strength and stamina from Allah (ﷻ). But this does not mean that they should fight with their bare hands when they have weapons to use, that they should engage the enemy in the open when they have shelters and positions to take advantage of, and that they should rely on a "theoretical and abstract" power of Allah (ﷻ) while becoming disinterested in husbanding all their resources and potentials. The Islamic commitment to Allah (ﷻ) will substantially prepare the willing Muslims to procure the weapons they need by their manufacturing the necessary armaments, and to make the best use out of the strategic arms they have in their possession. Likewise, the Islamic commitment to Allah (ﷻ) will require the Muslims to sever all dependency relationships with their enemies. They will no longer feel that there is any advantage to be gained from such relationships: no glory, no dignity, and no honor can come from hostile God-denying quarters. The Muslims will have to settle on the Qur'anic fact that is expressed time and again, **"...indeed, all grandeur and splendor is Allah's."** This statement of fact places the committed Muslims and the committed *kāfirs* where they belong, without blurred lines and confused interactions.

Not overstated enough, it is the commitment to Allah (ﷻ) that is power, the connection to all power, and the dispensing of that awesome power. On the other hand, it is *kufr* — the denial of Allah (ﷻ) — that is powerlessness and helplessness. The state of *kufr* is one of impotence and weakness. How, then, can people of *kufr* have power when they are feckless, inadequate, and lame?

This is the critical context that distinguishes between the essence of *īmān* and the appearance of *īmān*. The essence of *īmān* is well established and dwells in the nature of existence and in the nature of things. The psychological reality of this *īmān* is capable of routing *kufr* in any encounter because it corresponds to the permanent and pervasive power of Allah (ﷻ). But when *īmān* becomes a superficial veneer encrusting materialistic aspirations, then the Muslims will fall behind, fall back, and fail when they meet the essence of *kufr* at the battlefield, provided this *kufr* and its *kāfir* combatants are true to their *kufr* and their war against Islam. The essence of any ideology is stronger than its outward appearance and visible display. Therefore, the crux of *kufr* is more powerful than the pretext of *īmān*.

Truth and justice are the objectives of the Islamic commitment to Allah (ﷻ). Half truths and Hollywood justice are the elements of God-denial. When the Islamic commitment to Allah (ﷻ) moves the Muslims to unbending justice and the standard of truth as a measure of human affairs, that is, they are the “Will of Allah (ﷻ)” on earth, then there can be no *kufr* or combination of *kāfir* alliances that can stand in their way,

**But We launch truth and justice against perfidy and infidelity, and they [truth and justice] render them brain-dead, and then they [perfidy and infidelity] eventually expire (21:18).**

**And never will Allah allow the *kāfirs* to sidetrack the committed Muslims (4:141).**

Even with all the aforementioned character traits of *munāfiqs*, the Qur’an is still not satisfied that enough information has been

delivered to keep the committed Muslims alert and ever-conscious of these pretentious, insincere, and two-faced equivocators,

Lay eyes on the fact that these *munāfiqs* [Muslims of verbal loyalty to Allah while being *kāfirs* with hostile intents to Allah] who endeavor to fool Allah the while it is He who causes them to be deceived [by themselves]. And when they make an effort to pray, they do so lethargically. They pander to the public eye. They remember Allah only slightly, wavering between this and that, [true] neither to these nor those. But for him whom Allah lets go astray you can never find [for] him a way [out] (4:142–143).

When persevering and conscientious Muslims read this *āyah* carefully, they can only feel nauseated by these Islamic-speaking and *kāfir-acting* “Muslims.” Openhearted and *muttaqī* Muslims know that Allah (ﷻ) cannot be toyed with, let alone be fooled in the same way humans are often deceived. It is Allah (ﷻ) who knows what the hearts of men conceal. Muslims who are fertile with the meanings of this Qur’an understand that any human who tries to delude or con Allah (ﷻ) is either mentally challenged with a large measure of ignorance and obliviousness or just evil to the core. Muslims observing their Islamic responsibilities with sincerity and honor can only look down on such *munāfiqs*.

The *āyāt* demonstrate that, in reality, any *munāfiq* who tries to pull a fast one on Allah (ﷻ) is only fooling himself, as this is Allah’s (ﷻ) response to him. Cosmetic commitment applied to internal *kufr* is gradually failed by its own fraudulence toward Allah (ﷻ). Eventually such *nifāq* will be consumed by its own tricks. These types of inconsequential and sketchy Muslims are too self-absorbed to realize that shocks and jolts from Allah (ﷻ) are warnings for them to reconsider their internal thoughts and to amend their ways. Alarm bells are not enough to wake them up, as they tend to harbor erroneous suppositions about the meaning and timing of potentially corrective admonitions. Some people think that

“good times” substantiate their point of view on life; other people feel that “bad times” are a condemnation of a particular way of life. But on deeper consideration, life is too complex to be evaluated with a surface cause-and-effect analysis. Leisure and luxury are deceptive; they are an indication of nothing other than Allah’s (ﷻ) liberality or trial. *Munāfiqs* who are basking in a lush and leisurely world are the ones who end up believing they deserve what they have, not knowing that their doom is around the corner. Allah (ﷻ) allows them, possessed as they are by their own delusions, to walk to their own cliff. And from there, the actions that brought them to the edge of the precipice will push them off into the abyss.

In a close Islamic community these preposterous “Muslims” can be identified with ease because involved Muslims are deep into the meanings of this Qur’an and at the same time have enough social and personal contact with people to know where to be on the life-and-death issues of the day. The engaged Muslims who can see with Qur’anic vision are able to “X-ray,” so to speak, the conscience of these *munāfiqs*, courtesy of Allah’s (ﷻ) revealing words, **“And when they [the *munāfiqs*] turn out to pray, they do so sluggishly, only to be seen and praised by men, slightly conscious of Allah.”**

The daily *masjid* contact, which is a feature of Islamic life when people are motivated to go to congregational *ṣalāh* and to collective meetings in the *masjids*, acquaints the attentive Muslim with an observation about these *munāfiqs*: they do not have the spark that aggregates the other Muslims into their combined self — as is the case with *ṣalāh al-jamā‘ah*. They do not find it inspirational to be in the presence of Allah (ﷻ) who is attended by a public that may be in the hundreds, thousands, or millions. They are not moved by the mass attachment of Muslims to Allah (ﷻ). That consistently attending activities in the *masjid* suffices to identify the *munāfiqs* is another advantage of Muslim public life.

When Muslims are cut off from each other, that is, when they no longer have close contact in the *masjid*, these *munāfiqs* will feel right at home because they will go undetected, even though these Qur’anic *āyāt* are plain enough to expose them. But if the Muslims

themselves are not conducting their affairs in the overall pattern of behavior outlined throughout the *sūrah*s and *āyāt* of this Book, they give respite to the *munāfiqs* milling about in society to work behind their backs. In an Islamic society living up to its standards with daily and intense public contact, these *munāfiqs* come out with their true characters. They drag their feet to the *masjid*, they slowly join the congregation, and they idly go through the physical motions of the *ṣalāh*. They go to the *masjid*, attend the *jamā'ah*, and perform the *ṣalāh* to satisfy public expectation. Despite these pretensions, they are not satisfying their conscience and they are not satisfying Allah (ﷻ). They only have a superficial and opportunistic awareness of Allah (ﷻ). They could not care less whether Allah (ﷻ) is watching them; however, they do care very much that people are watching them! These are not Muslims standing in reverence in the presence of Allah (ﷻ) during *ṣalāh*; rather they are people who play to the camera, wanting the approval of other people, especially those who have power.

The more this happens, the more the committed Muslims will feel disconnected from these con-Muslims. This social aversion sends a strong psychological message to these *munāfiqs*. There need not be any legal action taken here; the emotional rejection delivers a more persuasive impact as the *munāfiqs* themselves now realize that the committed Muslims know who they really are. This, though, assumes there is a public and popular consciousness of the *munāfiqs* as a parasitic class in society.

The *āyah* cements the foibles of these *munāfiqs* yet further, **“Fluctuating in-between. Not belonging to these nor to those.”** Prevaricating Muslims who lend their lives to being on both sides of the eternal difference between *kufr* and *īmān* can only solicit disrespect from the majority of committed Muslims who are all around them. When skin-deep Muslims are undecided about a commitment to Allah (ﷻ), when they are irresolute about their duties and responsibilities in a growing and expanding Islamic society, and when they sway to and fro and can never have a principled position along with their Islamic peers, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances, they only tap into the resentment of the committed Muslims.



*Munāfiqs* cannot commit themselves to a position in the war between the forces of *kufr* and *īmān* and they cannot frankly come out in public and express their innermost thoughts and feelings. They stand out as a class with its own character traits: cowards, persons who are wishy-washy and lacking in confidence. And thus by acting on the basis of no values whatsoever, what these *munāfiqs* do is morally indefensible. When these eccentrics are inured to this character, when they calcify into a class of their own, and when they feed off false hopes and inaccurate information, no Muslim on earth can bring them out of their aberrant ways, “...but for him who Allah lets go away [from the right path] you can never find for him a way [out of his deviation].”

### Security Comes from Allah’s (ﷻ) Power, Not the *Kāfirs*’

The case against the *munāfiqs* has been presented so far with clarity and conclusive information. By now, the informed and hardworking Muslims should have a very hard time tolerating these *munāfiqs*. And with that psychological rejection, the form of speech now turns to the committed Muslims and raises a red flag: beware of being caught in the snare of these *munāfiqs*. Their primary mission in life is to lure the committed Muslims into shifting their allegiance from Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) to the *kāfirs*. That is essentially what they want: for the Muslims to relocate their loyalty and to become an extension of the *kufr* establishment — one way or the other,

**O you who have committed [to Allah’s power]! Do not take the deniers [of Allah’s power] for your superiors and allies in preference to the committed Muslims! Do you want to place before Allah a manifest proof of your guilt? Verily, those who shift allegiance [the *munāfiqs*] shall be in the lowest shafts of the Fire, and you will find none who could help them [out].**

Excluded from this are those who repent, and live righteously, and solicit the aegis of Allah, and grow

sincere in their commitment to Allah alone: for these shall be one [and together] with the committed Muslims — and in time Allah will grant to all committed Muslims a mighty reward (4:144–146).

The opening address is reinforced by the concluding one, “O you who are securely committed [to the power of Allah]!” This commitment is a matter of security and a trust. The committed Muslims trust in Allah’s (ﷻ) security and they are secure in their dependence upon Him. With this Qur’anic depth of experience and knowledge, vigilant Muslims should never consider the *kāfirs* as superiors and allies, even though there may be some tempting conditions or circumstances for that to happen. In the days back in Madinah some committed Muslims had personal and financial connections with the Yahūd — who were always on the *kufr* side of any issue. And in the day-to-day life interactions of the marketplace and elsewhere in the field, the association with these inveterate enemies of Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) had the effect of “watering down” the allegiance and dependency relationship to Allah (ﷻ), thereby duping some gullible Muslims to fall for the “obvious” forces of *kufr*, represented by Makkah and Arabia at large.

There was also the temptation of reverting to *kufr* superiority and hegemony due to the fact that many Muslims in Madinah still had blood relatives who were *mushriks* in Makkah. The psychological, financial, and social pressure was such that there could have been some committed Muslims who were entertaining the idea of returning to the pre-Islamic and pre-Madinan world of *kufr* supremacy. This is not to say there was any danger of a mass “reversion” of committed Muslims to the hated ways of *kufr*. Rather, there was the possibility that some committed Muslims may have been considering that type of backslide or relapse. For this reason, among others, it was necessary to open their eyes lest they be ensnared by the *munāfiqs* as they incrementally relocated their dependency relationship from Allah (ﷻ) to the *kāfirs*, “Do you want to place before Allah a manifest proof of your guilt?” This question, in the way it is phrased, is enough to make sensitive Muslim hearts and

delicate Muslim minds avoid any incentive or temptation to rejoin the world and the warlords of *kufr*.

To avoid sliding into *nifāq*, the committed Muslims are told of the *munāfiqs*' whereabouts in the world to come, **“Truly, those who switch allegiance [the *munāfiqs*] shall be in the bottom-most pit of the Fire, and you will find none who could help them.”** In this life, they wanted to be attached to the world, the earth, and its sensual enticements. And in the eternal life, they shall have what they were desperate for — but in the opposite intensity they had desired. Their worldly attachment to the power of *kufr* landed them in the deepest crater of the Fire. Lacking any essence, they failed to stand up for the power of truth and justice, preferring to fall in behind the power of *kufr*, and in the process, compounding the suffering of Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) and those who gave their allegiance to him. And thus, in the end, these *munāfiqs* will turn out to suffer like no one else.

In Allah's (ﷻ) mercy there is always space for relief, forgiveness, and salvation; but any repentance has to be done in this world and it has to be through proper behavior and appropriate work,

**Excepted are those who repent and do what is right, and bind to Allah with fortitude: they are with the committed Muslims, and Allah will give the committed Muslims a reigning reward (4:146).**

Going from *kufr* to the domain of *īmān* is not an impossible task. Some people may realize they are in the despicable company of *kufr* and its false power manifestations in this world, and should they have the courage of conscience to make a change, they can extricate themselves from such attachment by turning to Allah (ﷻ) and promising Him they will no longer curry favor with that *kufr* power structure — emotionally and physically; and from then on they will only do what is right in light of their allegiance and loyalty to Allah (ﷻ). They will have to demonstrate this new orientation — not by paying financial penalties, by doing hard labor, or by observing some legal procedure — but by binding to Allah (ﷻ) with fortitude and immunity from *kufr*. It is their human con-

science, hearts, and minds that have to reposition themselves and adhere to Allah (ﷻ). Once that happens, they can join the committed Muslims and Allah (ﷻ) will give them a compensation that is befitting, worthwhile, and beyond that, to their liking.

The lesson winds down with a moving reminder that Allah (ﷻ) does not take personal revenge. He is not concerned with imposing Himself on people by force or through coercion. He does not favor punishing people. All these assumptions belong to pagan agendas and idolatrous influences. People can only improve their lives and enhance their well-being by making a voluntary commitment to Allah (ﷻ) and by appreciating His abundance and generosity. This heartfelt admiration for Allah (ﷻ) and abidance to Him is the essence of life, and it is therein that man conducts his affairs, discharges his duties, manages his behaviors, and observes his rights.

**Why would Allah cause you to suffer [for your past sins] if you are grateful and [deeply] committed to Allah — seeing that Allah is always sensitive to gratitude, all-knowing? (4:147).**

Why would Allah (ﷻ) make intelligent human beings endure agony and pain for their past blunders and divested offenses? Allah's (ﷻ) punishment is set about due to man's refutation of His bounties and expression of ingratitude. Injustice accrues from this attitude, leading ultimately to tyranny, oppression, and abuse, all of which involve a disruption in the character and composition of the otherwise harmonious creation He designated to be at the service of man. Human beings are not permitted to be unjust. Willful injustice necessitates requital and atonement, a cleansing of sorts, if not in this life, then in the next. Is there a threat in this *āyah*? Yes — but only to he who does not take account of Allah (ﷻ) and treasure His kindness. This, though, does not mean that Allah (ﷻ) is eager to punish people or to take revenge on deviating individuals. Any human mind that attaches a trait of cruelty or brutality to Allah (ﷻ) is thoroughly wrong and out of place.

Allah (ﷻ) is not constrained by or subject to the feelings and priorities that are peculiar to humans in authority or humans exercising power. All it takes for us human beings to be in a proper relationship with Allah (ﷻ) is to acknowledge His power and appreciate His grace. This dynamic will always summon Allah's (ﷻ) positive and caring involvement in our lives. He will be in a position to “thank” us for our correct and appropriate relationship with Him. Imagine! The Creator, the Initiator, the Maker, the Generous Giver, and the One who needs none of humanity or human gestures is as kind, loving, and caring as to be thankful to us when we are thankful to Him. And this reciprocity of “thanks and gratitude” moves the human heart to do the right thing.

All the activities in our lives, and especially our interpersonal and trans-communal relations are lodged in the depth of this human heart that is called upon to strengthen its God-given feelings and thoughts — if only we can remain grateful and sincerely committed to Allah (ﷻ). This is what is at the core of human relations. Allah (ﷻ) is not asking for something impossible. He is asking for feelings and ideas that are within our capability and that are nurtured positively and productively through His words of wisdom, *āyāt* of apprehension, and Book of belief.

## The Recalcitrant Yahūdī

Nearing its end, *Sūrah al-Nisā'* now begins to distill key aspects of the ideological and conceptual Islamic frame of reference. The *āyāt* of the *sūrah* are tailored to dwell deep inside the growing Islamic popular consciousness, dispelling dated *jāhili* notions and prevailing over perceptions that are related to ego-nationalist "interests." *Sūrah al-Nisā'*, in other words, is sweeping away the old public mind and ushering in a new social consciousness that consists of a transformation of people in their moral, communal, and social spheres of perceptions and practices. The Muslims had a new program to implement, and in order to gain their Islamic society, they now had to rid themselves of their *jāhili* alter egos. This was not going to be an easy task. The erstwhile *jāhili* order had its pundits and stalwarts, its defenders and promoters, its diehard supporters, and its historical media of socialization. These individuals and interests were not about to give up their landed positions, share their privileged statuses, and lay down their arms without putting up a fight. The Qur'an identifies these social classes and networks as intransigent *mushriks*, crafty scripturalists (Yahūd and Naṣārā), and their corresponding "Muslims," otherwise known as the *munāfiqs*. The world order these special-interest groups stood for had to be dismantled by word if possible and by war if necessary.

The faithful and determined Muslims around Allah's (ﷻ) Book and Prophet (ﷺ) would learn through this inescapable transformation that the Yahūd and Naṣārā in their political and military formations were no simple obstacle. This evolving nexus between people who represent a scriptural interest began to show its partisan colors from the first days of Islamic sovereignty in Madinah. Something in their subliterate psychology appears to have caused them to act as a circuit of impedance to an Islamic society with an Islamic executive authority.

Islamic political maturity coming of age demonstrated how the Yahūd in particular reacted to Islamic independence and Islamic jurisdiction in Madinah. These Qur'anic *āyāt*, in addition to many others, indicate that it was the Yahūd who felt threatened by

the Islamic governance of an Islamic state. This new dynamic forced these Yahūd to come up to the social surface with their false pride in the assertion that they were God's chosen race, and His favorite ones. The essentially Yahūdī incompatibility with the rising tide of Islamic "self-determination" turned them into thoroughgoing enemies who were willing to use any available weapon to cut down Islam as a state and society together. The latter part of *Sūrah al-Nisā'* here peels another layer off this Yahūdī nature, its intentions, and its mental animus toward Islam and the latter's committed adherents. Even their spurning historical deportment with some of their previous prophets is brought out into the open. Courtesy of this *sūrah*, the reader will recognize them to be as consistent in their objections to and intrigue against Muhammad (ﷺ) as they were with their biblical Prophets (ﷺ).

As we pace ourselves through this *sūrah*, we will have little choice but to own up to the enormous responsibilities we have as Muslims who constitute an *ummaḥ*. We will have to realize that we are not a dispersed crowd of people, and that we have a mission of discipline, unification, and direction. We will also have to apprehend the fact that our lifelong mission requires alertness and attention: this Qur'an is not meant for the absentminded and the indifferent. Per this *sūrah*, we are unmistakably tasked with a mission requiring sacrifice and struggle — that is, a jihad.

- (4:148) Allah does not like any expression of flagrant language in public, unless it be by him who has been wronged [thereby]. And Allah is indeed all-hearing, all-knowing.
- (4:149) Whether you do good openly or you conceal it, or pardon others for evil [done to you], for behold, Allah is indeed an absolver of sins, infinite in His power.
- (4:150) Verily, those who deny Allah and His Apostles by endeavoring to make a distinction between [commitment to] Allah and [commitment to] His Apostles, and who say, "We affirm some but we deny others," and want to pursue a path in-between —

لَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا  
 عَلِيمًا ﴿١٤٨﴾ إِنْ بُدُوا خَيْرًا أَوْ تُخَفُّوهُ أَوْ تَعْفُوا عَنْ سُوءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ  
 عَفْوًا قَدِيرًا ﴿١٤٩﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيُرِيدُونَ  
 أَنْ يُفْرِقُوا بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ نُؤْمِنُ بِبَعْضٍ وَنَكْفُرُ  
 بِبَعْضٍ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٥٠﴾ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ  
 الْكَافِرُونَ حَقًّا وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا ﴿١٥١﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا  
 بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلَمْ يُفْرِقُوا بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ أُولَئِكَ سَوْفَ يُؤْتِيهِمْ  
 أَجْرَهُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿١٥٢﴾ يَسْأَلُكَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ أَنْ  
 تَنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ كِتَابًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَقَدْ سَأَلُوا مُوسَىٰ أَكْبَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَقَالُوا  
 أَرِنَا اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّعِقَةُ بِظُلْمِهِمْ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ مِنْ  
 بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَعَفَوْنَا عَنْ ذَلِكَ وَعَاتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ سُلْطَانًا مُّبِينًا  
 ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَهُمُ الطُّورَ بِمِيثَاقِهِمْ وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ ادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُلْنَا  
 لَهُمْ لَا تَعْدُوا فِي السَّبْتِ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ﴿١٥٤﴾ فِيمَا نَقَضِهِمْ  
 مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَكُفِّرَهُمْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَقَتْلِهِمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بَغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَقَوْلِهِمْ قُلُوبُنَا  
 غُلْفٌ بَلْ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٥٥﴾



وَيَكْفُرَهُمْ وَقَوْلِهِمْ عَلَى مَرْيَمَ بُهْتَنًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٥٦﴾ وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا  
 الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَكِنْ شُبِّهَ  
 لَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَخْلَفُوا فِيهِ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِمَّنْهُ مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ  
 الظَّنِّ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا ﴿١٥٧﴾ بَلْ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا  
 ﴿١٥٨﴾ وَإِنْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا لِيُؤْمِنَنَّ بِهِ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهِ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ  
 يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا ﴿١٥٩﴾ فَيُظْلَمُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْبَاتٍ  
 أُحِلَّتْ لَهُمْ وَبِصَدِّهِمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا ﴿١٦٠﴾ وَأَخَذَهُمُ الرِّبَا وَقَدْ  
 نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَأَكْلِهِمْ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَطْلِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا  
 أَلِيمًا ﴿١٦١﴾ لَكِنَّ الرَّاْسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ مِنْهُمْ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ  
 إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَالْمُقِيمِينَ الصَّلَاةَ وَالْمُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ  
 وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أُولَئِكَ سَنُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٦٢﴾ إِنَّا  
 أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّنَّ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى  
 إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَعِيسَى  
 وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُونُسَ وَهَارُونَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَآتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ زَبُورًا ﴿١٦٣﴾ وَرُسُلًا  
 قَدْ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ وَكَلَّمَ

اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا ﴿١٦٤﴾ رُسُلًا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ  
 لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٦٥﴾ لَكِنَّ  
 اللَّهَ يَشْهَدُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ أَنْزَلَهُ بِعِلْمِهِ وَالْمَلَكُ يَشْهَدُونَ  
 وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا ﴿١٦٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَدْ  
 ضَلُّوا ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿١٦٧﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَظَلَمُوا لَمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ  
 لِيُغْفِرَ لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيَهْدِيَهُمْ طَرِيقًا ﴿١٦٨﴾ إِلَّا طَرِيقَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا  
 أَبَدًا وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿١٦٩﴾ يَتَأَيَّأُ النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ  
 الرَّسُولُ بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنُوا خَيْرًا لَكُمْ وَإِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا  
 فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٧٠﴾

- (4:151) It is they, they who are truly denying the truth: and for those who deny the truth We have readied shameful suffering.
- (4:152) But as for those who commit to Allah and His Apostles and make no distinction between any of them — unto them, in time, will He grant their rewards [in full]. And Allah is indeed much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace.
- (4:153) The followers of the Old Testament demand of you [O Prophet] that you cause a revelation to be sent down to them from heaven. And an even greater thing than this did they demand of Moses when they said, “Make us see Allah face to face,” whereupon the thunderbolt of punishment

- overtook them for this, their brazenness. After that, they referred to the [golden] calf — and this after all evidence of the truth had come to them! Nonetheless, We effaced this [sin of theirs], and vouchsafed unto Moses a clear mandate,
- (4:154) Raising Mount Sinai high above them in witness of their solemn pledge. And We said to them, “Enter the gate humbly”; and We told them, “Do not break the Sabbath-law”; and We accepted from them a most solemn pledge.
  - (4:155) And so, [We punished them] for the breaking of their pledge; and their refusal to acknowledge Allah’s messages; and their slaying of prophets against all right; and their boast, “Our hearts are already full of knowledge” — no, but Allah has sealed their hearts in result of their denial of the truth, and [now] they commit to but few things;
  - (4:156) And for their refusal to acknowledge the truth; and the awesome calumny that they utter against Mary;
  - (4:157) And their boast, “Behold, we have slain the Christ Jesus, son of Mary, [who claimed to be] an apostle of Allah!” However, they did not slay him, and neither did they crucify him, but it only seemed to them [as if it had been] so; and, verily, those who hold conflicting views thereon are indeed confused, having no [real] knowledge thereof, and following mere conjecture. For, of a certainty, they did not slay him:
  - (4:158) No, Allah exalted him unto Himself — and Allah is indeed almighty, wise.
  - (4:159) Yet there is not one of the followers of earlier revelation who does not, at the moment of his death, grasp the truth about Jesus; and on the Day of Resurrection he [himself] shall bear witness to the truth against them.
  - (4:160) So, then, for the wickedness committed by those who followed the Jewish faith, We did deny them certain of the good things of life that [aforetime] had been allowed to them; and [We did this] for their having so often turned away from the path of Allah;
  - (4:161) And [for] their taking usury although it had been forbidden to them; and [for] their wrongful devouring of

other people's possessions. And for those from among them who [continue to] deny the truth, We have readied grievous suffering.

- (4:162) But as for those from among them who are deeply rooted in knowledge, and the sincere devotees who are committed to that which has been bestowed upon you from on high as well as that which was bestowed from on high before you, and those who are [especially keen on] standardized *ṣalāh*, and [institutionalized] *zakāh*, and all who are committed to Allah and the Last Day — these it is unto whom We shall grant a mighty compensation.
- (4:163) Behold, We have inspired you [O Prophet] just as We inspired Noah and all the prophets after him; as We inspired Abraham, and Ismā'īl, and Isaac, and Jacob, and their descendants, including Jesus, and Job, and Jonah, and Aaron, and Solomon; and as We vouchsafed unto David a book of divine wisdom;
- (4:164) And as [We inspired other] apostles whom We have mentioned to you before this, as well as apostles whom We have not mentioned to you; and as Allah spoke His word unto Moses:
- (4:165) [We sent all these] apostles as heralds of glad tidings and as warners, so that men might have no excuse before Allah after [the coming of] these apostles — and Allah is indeed almighty, wise.
- (4:166) However it be, Allah [Himself] bears witness to [the truth of] what He has bestowed from on high upon you. Out of His own wisdom has He bestowed it from on high, with the angels bearing witness thereto — although none can bear witness as Allah does.
- (4:167) Behold, those who are bent on denying the truth and on turning others away from the path of Allah have indeed gone far astray.
- (4:168) Behold, as for those who are bent on denying the truth and on evildoing, Allah will indeed not forgive them, nor will He guide them onto any road,

- (4:169) But the road that leads to Hell, therein to abide beyond the count of time: and this is indeed easy for Allah.
- (4:170) O mankind! The Apostle has now come to you with the truth from your Sustainer: commit [with security and trust], then, for your own good! And if you deny the truth — behold, unto Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth, and Allah is indeed all-knowing, wise! (al-Nisā':148–170).

### The Right to Speak Freely Is Tempered by Moral Standards

This lesson has to do with speech and public discourse. Publicizing the systematic acts and policies that generate oppression, the degree of tolerance and forgiveness of such things, and the public promotion of systematic goodness or its “low profile” are all elements included in the following *āyah*,

Allah does not like any [verbal] expression of distasteful discourse in public, unless it be by someone who has been offended [thereby]. And Allah is indeed all-hearing, all-knowing. Whether you do good publicly or privately, or pardon others for offenses [done to you], for, behold, Allah is indeed an absolver of sins, infinite in His power (4:148–149).

Here we, once again, come across a character lesson that adds a significant feature to the Muslim disposition. Out of the pre-Islamic *jāhili*, eccentric individualism, the Qur'an refashions a new persona in which its idiosyncratic cast complements its social form, and vice versa. Reading this Qur'an makes one feel like he is part of an *ummaḥ* in the making, a significant component of which is the cleansing of man's scruples, followed quickly by decontamination of his social matrix. The Qur'an insists on raising the moral bar and associated legal code to their God-given standards. An Islamic social order is by definition morally superior in its conduct of speech — from its individual articulations to its collective voice.

The social morality that permeates an Islamic order comes from Allah (ﷻ); therefore, it is natural to expect the Islamic milieu to be attended by high moral standards and deep moral values. Other earthly societies and nations who lack this bond with Allah (ﷻ) cannot come close to the Islamic standard, and can only hope to catch up to the Muslims when they diminish themselves by becoming rubber-stamp or shadow “Muslims.”

In the first few hundred years after the Prophet (ﷺ), the impact of this moral excellence reverberated around the world in such an amazing way that secular historians, philosophers, and ideologues are still perplexed about how to explain it — even with the advantage of hindsight. The robust Islamic moral fiber swiftly suffocated the corrupt political and economic leadership of other nations, countries, and monarchies. It was the Islamic moral substructure that created the conditions for scientific accomplishments, economic prosperity, political fairness, ultimately establishing a civilizational precedent. Many Muslim and non-Muslim researchers lose sight of this fact: the quality of the moral bond with Allah (ﷻ) that fueled the movement of Islam — a movement chaperoned by the responsibility to lead and show others the way — in all directions. This “social law” (a *sunnah*) has escaped the attention of some of the most learned scholars who still fall short on logic when it comes to explaining how Muslims from the wasteland of Arabia virtually liberated the known world at that time. Understanding the Qur’an is probably as close as anyone can get to explaining such a global thrust; and an understanding of the following *āyāt* will offer a partial answer to the worldwide movement and popularity of Islam,

**Allah does not like [people] going public with objectionable language except for he who has been oppressed; and Allah is always there hearing and knowing [what you say]. Whether you publicize virtue or conceal it, or if you pardon an offensive activity — it is Allah who is ever-forgiving, high-powered (4:148–149).**

Society has to be molded so as to be consistent with the conscience of the individual. The mannerism of society has to agree with the fertile conscience that is nurtured by this Book of Allah (ﷻ). And so it follows that in the area of what could and what should be said or not said, public statements have to be carefully weighed. It is not the norm in a social setting where Islam is the standard, model, and pattern to have the airwaves filled with loose statements, disgusting commentaries, or unsubstantiated public pronouncements, which may cause all sorts of social tension, leading eventually to unintended consequences.

In today's world going public with the use of negative language is done via *broadcasting* or the media. In general, broadcasting consists of the provision of television and radio programs and commercials for the general public. Starting in the 1920s, broadcasting, whether of the commercial or "public-service" variety, quickly established itself at regional, national, and international levels as a popular source of entertainment and information. The medium has always been subject to controls, the severity of which has varied according to the political character of the country concerned. In recent years narrowcasting has been introduced for services and programming geared to special interest groups or a targeted audience that pays a fee. The United States has been a particularly important area for the development of broadcasting, both in terms of the large number of radio and television stations, as well as the number of sets, with probably over a billion radio and television receivers in use today.

A worldwide activity of immense proportions, broadcasting has come to necessitate its own International Telecommunication Union (ITU), an agency of the United Nations, which since 1947 has promoted worldwide cooperation in all aspects of telecommunications, such as the regulation of radio frequencies.<sup>557</sup> The ITU produces a monthly *Telecommunication Journal* in separate English, French, and Spanish editions from its Geneva headquarters.

Long before the right to "free" speech supplanted morality from the public discourse by the license to print and say anything and everything, this *āyah* told us that public expressions, public

images, and public ideas should be free of foul language, inappropriate figures, and offensive conduct. All media, television, radio, cinema, and the press in an Islamic social environment should be free of indecent and provocative audio and visual contents. Although each medium of mass communication has always had its own distinctive output, technology, and industrial structure, the variegated types of media are nowadays often discussed as a single entity. Among the reasons for this are their combined impact as providers of entertainment and information, their presumed power to mold public opinion and to set moral and aesthetic standards, their often parasitic interest in each other's personalities and problems, and the growth of cross-ownership among their various sectors.

The media and its role in today's world has virtually come under the tight grip of *advertising* — the practice of “informing” and influencing others not personally known to the communicator through paid messages in the media, and also the advertisements themselves. From amateurish origins, for example, tradesmen's signs, advertising has developed in parallel with modern industrial society and the mass media. News-sheets in the 17th century carried brief statements, such as announcing the sale of patent medicines, but it was not until the late-19th century, with the advent of the mass production of consumer goods, that the industry developed on the huge scale found today. Advertising for consumer goods, whether of the “fast moving” variety (for example, breakfast cereals and cleaning agents) or “durables” (for example, cars), has long been the most conspicuous kind — on poster or billboard sites, in the press, and on television. *Display ads* for such products in newspapers or magazines are characterized by their size and use of graphics (especially photographs), slogans, and large typography. By contrast, *classified ads* are typically single-column width, consisting of words only, and grouped together under headings, such as *personals*, *situations vacant*, or *help wanted*. Other approaches include *direct marketing*, by mail or telephone, and *direct response advertising*, via tear-off coupons, both of which have resulted from the difficulty mass media advertising has experienced in reaching a target audience and in measuring its own effectiveness.



Manufacturers and retailers are not the only groups to realize the value of communicating with the general public through advertising. Governments, political parties, service industries (for example, banks and financial institutions, telecommunications firms), trade unions, employers' associations, pressure groups, and charities also employ advertising as a major means of promoting ideas and causes. Regulations on who may advertise and on the quantity and nature of ads, especially commercials, vary from country to country. In recent years some advertisers have found the sponsorship of sporting and cultural events a convenient way to sidestep regulations applying elsewhere to the promotion of their products, especially cigarettes, and a means of associating these with healthy or prestigious activities. Starting as small-scale brokers for advertising space on behalf of newspaper proprietors, most modern advertising agencies now offer a "full service" comprising market research, creative expertise, media planning, and media buying. The influence of the United States in developing advertising techniques, for instance, Madison Avenue, has been central.<sup>558</sup> Since the 1960s, the growth of the industry has spawned creative shops and freelance graphic designers who offer specialized design and copywriting services, with "media independents" later doing the same for media planning and buying.

Advertising is only one, though perhaps the most controversial, of the elements of the "marketing mix." As such it has always been subject to attack, whether on moral, ideological, or aesthetic grounds. Underlying this criticism is the presumption that advertising has pernicious effects on individuals, social groups, or whole societies. Apologists respond by claiming that advertising merely reflects the values and styles already existing in society. Consider the connections between advertising, predatory capitalism, and consumerism on the one hand and the concept of perpetual growth, the environmental crisis, and the subjugation of the Third World on the other, as described by Dr. Sut Jhally, one of the world's leading scholars looking at the role played by advertising and popular culture in the processes of social control and identity construction,

In this article I wish to make a simple claim: 20th century advertising is the most powerful and sustained system of propaganda in human history and its cumulative cultural effects, unless quickly checked, will be responsible for destroying the world as we know it. As it achieves this it will be responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of non-Western peoples and will prevent the peoples of the world from achieving true happiness. Simply stated, our survival as a species is dependent upon minimizing the threat from advertising and the commercial culture that has spawned it. I am stating my claims boldly at the outset so there can be no doubt as to what is at stake in our debates about the media and culture as we enter the new millenium.

### **Colonizing Culture**

...It is not enough of course to only produce the “immense collection of commodities” they must also be sold, so that further investment in production is feasible. Once produced commodities must go through the circuit of distribution, exchange and consumption, so that profit can be returned to the owners of capital and value can be “realized” again in a money form. If the circuit is not completed the system would collapse into stagnation and depression. Capitalism therefore has to ensure the sale of commodities on pain of death. In that sense the problem of capitalism is not mass production (which has been solved) but is instead the problem of consumption. That is why from the early years of this century it is more accurate to use the label “the consumer culture” to describe the Western industrial market societies.

So central is consumption to its survival and growth that at the end of the 19th century industrial capitalism invented a unique new institution — the advertising industry — to ensure that the “immense accumulation of commodities” are converted back into a money form.

The function of this new industry would be to recruit the best creative talent of the society and to create a culture in which desire and identity would be fused with commodities to make the dead world of things come alive with human and social possibilities... And indeed there has never been a propaganda effort to match the effort of advertising in the 20th century. More thought, effort, creativity, time, and attention to detail has gone into the selling of the immense collection of commodities than any other campaign in human history to change public consciousness. One indication of this is simply the amount of money that has been exponentially expended on this effort. Today, in the United States alone, over \$175 billion a year is spent to sell us things. This concentration of effort is unprecedented.

It should not be surprising that something this central and with so much being expended on it should become an important presence in social life. Indeed, commercial interests intent on maximizing the consumption of the immense collection of commodities have colonized more and more of the spaces of our culture. For instance, almost the entire media system (television and print) has been developed as a delivery system for marketers; its prime function is to produce audiences for sale to advertisers. Both the advertisements it carries, as well as the editorial matter that acts as a support for it, celebrate the consumer society. The movie system, at one time outside the direct influence of the broader marketing system, is now fully integrated into it through the strategies of licensing, tie-ins, and product placements. The prime function of many Hollywood films today is to aid in the selling of the immense collection of commodities. As public funds are drained from the non-commercial cultural sector, art galleries, museums, and symphonies bid for corporate sponsorship. Even those institutions thought to be outside of the market are being sucked in.

High schools now sell the sides of their buses, the spaces of their hallways, and the classroom time of their students to hawkers of candy bars, soft drinks, and jeans. In New York City, sponsors are being sought for public playgrounds. In the contemporary world everything is sponsored by someone.

...The right question would ask about the cultural role of advertising, not its marketing role. Culture is the place and space where a society tells stories about itself, where values are articulated and expressed, where notions of good and evil, of morality and immorality, are defined. In our culture it is the stories of advertising that dominate the spaces that mediate this function. If human beings are essentially a storytelling species, then to study advertising is to examine the central storytelling mechanism of our society. The correct question to ask from this perspective, is not whether particular ads sell the products they are hawking, but what are the consistent stories that advertising spins as a whole about what is important in the world, about how to behave, about what is good and bad. Indeed, it is to ask what values does advertising consistently push.

### **Happiness**

Every society has to tell a story about happiness, about how individuals can satisfy themselves and feel both subjectively and objectively good. The cultural system of advertising gives a very specific answer to that question for our society. The way to happiness and satisfaction is through the consumption of objects through the marketplace. Commodities will make us happy. In one very important sense, that is the consistent and explicit message of every single message within the system of market communication.

Neither the fact of advertising's colonization of the horizons of imagination or the pushing of a story about

the centrality of goods to human satisfaction should surprise us. The immense collection of goods have to be consumed (and even more goods produced) and the story that is used to inure this function is to equate goods with happiness. Insiders to the system have recognized this obvious fact for many years. Retail analyst Victor Liebow said, just after the second world war, “Our enormously productive economy... demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and the selling of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction in commodities... We need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced, and discarded at an ever increasing rate.

So economic growth is justified not simply on the basis that it will provide employment (after all a host of alternative non-productive activities could also provide that) but because it will give us access to more things that will make us happy. This rationale for the existing system of ever-increasing production is told by advertising in the most compelling form possible.

...The attractions of this vision in the Third World are not difficult to discern. When your reality is empty stomachs and empty shelves, no wonder the marketplace appears as the panacea for your problems. When your reality is hunger and despair it should not be surprising that the seductive images of desire and abundance emanating from the advertising system should be so influential in thinking about social and economic policy. Indeed not only happiness but political freedom itself is made possible by access to the immense collection of commodities. These very powerful stories that equate happiness and freedom with consumption and advertising [are] the main propaganda arm of this view.

The question that we need to pose at this stage (that is almost never asked) is, “Is it true?” Does happiness come from material things? Do we get happier as a soci-

ety as we get richer, as our standard of living increases, as we have more access to the immense collection of objects? Obviously these are complex issues, but the general answer to these questions is “no.”

In a series of surveys conducted in the United States starting in 1945 (labeled “the happiness surveys”) researchers sought to examine the link between material wealth and subjective happiness, and concluded that, when examined both cross-culturally as well as historically in one society, there is a very weak correlation. Why should this be so?

When we examine this process more closely the conclusions appear to be less surprising than our intuitive perspective might suggest. In another series of surveys (the “quality of life surveys”) people were asked about the kinds of things that are important to them about what would constitute a good quality of life. The findings of this line of research indicate that if the elements of satisfaction were divided up into social values (love, family, friends) and material values (economic security and success), the former outranks the latter in terms of importance. What people say they really want out of life is: autonomy and control of life; good self-esteem; warm family relationships; tension-free leisure time; close and intimate friends; as well as romance and love. This is not to say that material values are not important. They form a necessary component of a good quality of life. But above a certain level of poverty and comfort, material things stop giving us the kind of satisfaction that the magical world of advertising insists they can deliver.

These conclusions point to one of the great ironies of the market system. The market is good at providing those things that can be bought and sold and it pushes us via advertising in that direction. But the real sources of happiness — social relationships — are outside the capability of the marketplace to provide. The marketplace cannot

provide love, it cannot provide real friendships, it cannot provide sociability. It can provide other material things and services but they are not what makes us happy.

The advertising industry has known this since at least the 1920s and in fact has stopped trying to sell us things based on their material qualities alone. If we examine the advertising of the end of the 19th and first years of the 20th century, we would see that advertising talked a lot about the properties of commodities, what they did, how well they did it, etc. But starting in the 1920s, advertising shifted to talking about the relationship of objects to the social life of people. It started to connect commodities (the things they had to sell) with the powerful images of a deeply desired social life that people say they want.

No wonder then that advertising is so attractive to us, so powerful, so seductive. What it offers us are images of the real sources of human happiness: family life, romance and love, sexuality and pleasure, friendship and sociability, leisure and relaxation, independence and control of life. That is why advertising is so powerful, that is what is real about it. The cruel illusion of advertising, however, is in the way that it links those qualities to a place that by definition cannot provide it — the market and the immense collection of commodities. The falsity of advertising is not in the appeals it makes (which are very real) but in the answers it provides. We want love and friendship and sexuality, and advertising points the way to it through objects.

...Advertising is like a fantasy factory, taking our desire for human social contact and reconceiving it, reconceptualizing it, connecting it with the world of commodities and then translating it into a form that can be communicated.

The great irony is that as advertising does this it draws us further away from what really has the capacity to sat-

isfy us (meaningful human contact and relationships) to what does not (material things). In that sense advertising reduces our capacity to become happy by pushing us, cajoling us, to carry on in the direction of things. If we really wanted to create a world that reflected our desires then the consumer culture would not be it. It would look very different — a society that stressed and built the institutions that would foster social relationships, rather than endless material accumulation. Advertising's role in channeling us in these fruitless directions is profound.

### **There Is No Such Thing as “Society”**

A culture dominated by commercial messages that tells individuals the way to happiness is through consuming objects bought in the marketplace gives a very particular answer to the question of “what is society?” What is it that binds us together in some kind of collective way, what concerns or interests do we share? In fact, Margaret Thatcher, the former conservative British prime minister, gave the most succinct answer to this question from the viewpoint of the market. In perhaps her most (in)famous quote she announced, “There is no such thing as ‘society.’ There are just individuals and their families.” According to Mrs. Thatcher, there is nothing solid we can call *society* — no group values, no collective interests; society is just a bunch of individuals acting on their own.

Indeed this is precisely how advertising talks to us. It addresses us not as members of society talking about collective issues, but as individuals. It talks about our individual needs and desires. It does not talk about those things we have to negotiate collectively, such as poverty, healthcare, housing and the homeless, the environment, etc. The market appeals to the worst in us (greed, selfishness) and discourages what is the best about us (compassion, caring, and generosity).



Again this should not surprise us. In those societies where the marketplace dominates then what will be stressed is what the marketplace can deliver — and advertising is the main voice of the marketplace — so discussions of collective issues are pushed to the margins of the culture. They are not there in the center of the main system of communication that exists in the society. It is no accident that politically the market vision associated with neo-conservatives has come to dominate at exactly that time when advertising has been pushing the same values into every available space in the culture. The widespread disillusionment with “government” (and hence with thinking about issues in a collective manner) has found extremely fertile ground in the fields of commercial culture.

Unfortunately, we are now in a situation, both globally and domestically, where solutions to pressing nuclear and environmental problems will have to take a collective form. The marketplace cannot deal with the problems that face us at the turn of the millenium. For example it cannot deal with the threat of nuclear extermination that is still with us in the post-Cold War age. It cannot deal with global warming, the erosion of the ozone layer, or the depletion of our non-renewable resources. The effects of the way we do “business” are no longer localized, they are now global, and we will have to have international and collective ways of dealing with them. Individual action will not be enough. As the environmentalist slogan puts it “we all live downstream now.”

Domestically, how do we find a way to tackle issues such as the nightmares of our inner cities, the ravages of poverty, the neglect of healthcare for the most vulnerable section of the population? How can we find a way to talk realistically and passionately of such problems within a culture where the central message is “don’t worry, be

happy.” ...Advertising systematically relegates discussion of key societal issues to the peripheries of the culture and talks in powerful ways instead of individual desire, fantasy, pleasure, and comfort.

Partly this is because of advertising's monopolization of cultural life. There is no space left for different types of discussion, no space at the center of the society where alternative values could be expressed. But it is also connected to the failure of those who care about collective issues to create alternative visions that can compete in any way with the commercial vision. The major alternatives offered to date have been a gray and dismal stateism. This occurred not only in the Western societies but also in the former so called “socialist” societies of Eastern Europe. These repressive societies never found a way to connect to people in any kind of pleasurable way, relegating issues of pleasure and individual expression to the non-essential and distracting aspects of social life. This indeed was the core of the failure of Communism in Eastern Europe. As Ehrenreich reminds us, not only was it unable to deliver the material goods, but it was unable to create a fully human “ideological retort to the powerful seductive messages of the capitalist consumer culture.” The problems are no less severe domestically.

...While the situation may appear hopeless we should remind ourselves of how important capitalism deems its monopoly of the imagination to be. The campaigns of successive United States governments against the Cuban revolution, and the obsession of our national security state with the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua in the 1980s, demonstrates the importance that capitalism places on smashing the alternative model. Even as the United States government continues to support the most vicious, barbarous, brutal and murderous regimes around the world, it takes explicit aim at those governments that have tried to redistribute wealth to the most needy,

[and that] have prioritized collective values over the values of selfishness and greed. The monopoly of the vision is vital and capitalism knows it.

### **The End of the World as We Know It**

The consumer vision that is pushed by advertising and which is conquering the world is based fundamentally, as I argued before, on a notion of economic growth. Growth requires resources (both raw materials and energy) and there is a broad consensus among environmental scholars that the earth cannot sustain past levels of expansion based upon resource-intensive modes of economic activity, especially as more and more nations struggle to join the feeding trough.

...The clearest indication of the way in which we produce is having an effect on the eco-sphere of the planet is the depletion of the ozone layer, which has dramatically increased the amount of ultraviolet radiation that is damaging or lethal to many life forms on the planet. In 1985 scientists discovered the existence of a huge hole in the ozone layer over the South Pole that is the size of the United States illustrating how the activities of humans are changing the very make-up of the earth. In his book, *The End of Nature*, Bill McKibben reminds us that “we have done this ourselves... by driving our cars, building our factories, cutting down our forests, turning on air conditioners.” He writes that the history of the world is full of the most incredible events that changed the way we lived, but they are all dwarfed by what we have accomplished in the last 50 years.

...The situation is so bad that the scientific community is desperately trying to get the attention of the rest of us to wake up to the danger. The Union of Concerned Scientists (representing 1700 of the world’s leading scientists, including a majority of Nobel laureates in the sciences) recently issued this appeal, “Human beings and

the natural world are on a collision course. Human activities inflict harsh and irreversible damage on the environment and on critical resources. If not checked, many of our current practices put at serious risk the future that we wish for human society and the plant and animal kingdoms, and may so alter the living world that it will be unable to sustain life in the manner we know. Fundamental changes are urgent if we are to avoid the collision our present course will bring.”

...As the political philosopher Robert Heilbroner says, “A crucial problem for the world of the future will be a concern for generations to come. Where will such concern arise? ...Contemporary industrial man, his appetite for the present whetted by the values of a high-consumption society and his attitude toward the future influenced by the prevailing canons of self-concern, has but a limited motivation to form such bonds. There are many who would sacrifice much for their children; fewer would do so for their grandchildren.”

Forming such bonds will be made even more difficult within our current context that stresses individual (not social) needs and the immediate situation (not the long-term). The advertising system will form the ground on which we think about the future of the human race, and there is nothing there that should give us any hope for the development of such a perspective. The time-frame of advertising is very short-term. It does not encourage us to think beyond the immediacy of present sensual experience... The value of a collective social future is one that does not, and will not, find expression within our commercially dominated culture. Indeed the prevailing values provide no incentive to develop bonds with future generations and there is a real sense of nihilism and despair about the future, and a closing of ranks against the outside.

### Imagining a Different Future

Many people thought that the environmental crisis would be the linchpin for the lessening of international tensions as we recognized our interdependence and our collective security and future. But as the Persian Gulf War [1990–1991] made clear, the New World Order will be based upon a struggle for scarce resources. Before the propaganda rationale shifted to the “struggle for freedom and democracy,” George [H.W.] Bush reminded the American people that the troops were being dispatched to the Gulf to protect the resources that make possible “our way of life.” An automobile culture and commodity-based culture such as ours is reliant upon sources of cheap oil. And if the cost of that is 100,000 dead Iraqis, well so be it. In such a scenario the peoples of the Third World will be seen as enemies who are making unreasonable claims on “our” resources. The future and the Third World can wait. Our commercial-dominated cultural discourse reminds us powerfully everyday, we need ours and we need it now. In that sense the Gulf War is a preview of what is to come. As the world runs out of resources, the most powerful military sources will use that might to ensure access.

...Advertising is the main voice of that [capitalist] threat. To the extent that it pushes us towards material things for satisfaction and away from the construction of social relationships, it pushes us down the road to increased economic production that is driving the coming environmental catastrophe. To the extent that it talks about our individual and private needs, it pushes discussion about collective issues to the margins. To the extent that it talks about the present only, it makes thinking about the future difficult. To the extent that it does all these things, then advertising becomes one of the major obstacles to our survival as a species.

Getting out of this situation, coming up with new ways to look at the world, will require enormous work,

and one response may just be to enjoy the end of the world — one last great fling, the party to end all parties. The alternative response — to change the situation, to work for humane, collective long-term values — will require an effort of the most immense kind.

And there is evidence to be hopeful about the results of such an attempt. It is important to stress that creating and maintaining the present structure of the consumer culture takes enormous work and effort. The reason consumer ways of looking at the world predominate is because there are billions of dollars being spent on it every single day. The consumer culture is not simply erected and then forgotten. It has to be held in place by the activities of the ad industry, and increasingly the activities of the public relations industry. Capitalism has to try really hard to convince us about the value of the commercial vision. In some senses consumer capitalism is a house of cards, held together in a fragile way by immense effort, and it could just as soon melt away as hold together. It will depend if there are viable alternatives that will motivate people to believe in a different future, if there are other ideas as pleasurable, as powerful, as fun, as passionate with which people can identify.<sup>559</sup>

This *āyāḥ*, which excludes provocative, harmful, and insensitive language from the public domain is also meant to address journalists and journalism — the profession of producing material of current interest for the press and broadcasting. Originally limited to the written word (print journalism), but now extended to the spoken word on radio and television (broadcast journalism) and images (photojournalism), the term applies to the collecting, working up, and editing of knowledge and information, especially news. Journalism has its own trade unions, professional associations, codes of conduct, awards, and training schemes. Its laudable claim to “Fourth Estate” status is often compromised by its collusion with

the powerful in society, invasions of personal privacy, and what is known as “checkbook” journalism.<sup>560</sup>

All the contents in these public expression outlets have to meet the decent and clean standards of the Qur'an and Sunnah. And this is equally applicable to all daily and weekly publications that circulate in the public domain. Therefore, no offensive language or foul expressions are to find a place in regularly published accounts of recent events, such as newspapers. Modern newspapers are printed, usually by offset lithography — on large sheets, folded multiple times and then collated with one section inserted inside another — and published at daily, weekly, or (occasionally) monthly frequencies.<sup>561</sup> Today, much of the previously widespread print circulation of major newspapers has been compromised by internet versions. Nonetheless in 2008, over 550 million printed newspapers were still purchased daily in the world.<sup>562</sup>

With all this worldwide print, audio, and visual production of information, ideas, and images, there is no observable standard of conscience, generally speaking, in this media industry. Rather, all forms of impolite and offensive words and images beam out of this secular, “free,” and undisciplined media, replete with the entire gamut of sexual content, nudity, violence, and vulgar language. The public domain, the means of communication, and all means of news and information production and projection should be purged of dirty-minded, foul-spoken, and off-color expression. One thing leads to another. If the public arena and the public mind is exposed to such tawdry vernacular, it is only a matter of time before the whole moral fabric of society is poisoned and then destroyed. This *āyah*, “**Allah dislikes the publicizing of indecent language except by he who is persecuted...**” does not amount to a violation of free speech, as some runaway minds would think. Muslims have values and ideals that serve them when they honor them. These self-ingrained and Qur'anically taught values and principles inhibit Muslims through their own free will from publicizing and advertizing vacuous, scatological, and vicious language.

In the imperialist-Zionist zone of the world, there seems to be a type of subtle but firm censorship on morally derived ideas while

there is a free hand given to vice centered ideas. When the internal government — the heart and conscience — is no longer at work, the external government — law-enforcement agencies and militaries — goes into action with its freedom of expression notion as well as its censorship regulations. It controls access to and dissemination of information, especially on political and moral issues. In its extreme form, the external government's secular censorship involves the wholesale banning of information, including works of fiction, enforced by the imposition of penalties against offenders. As such, this is considered to be a characteristic of authoritarian states, which seek to regulate the flow of information, opinion, and expression under the aegis of national security or corporate interest. Such "regulation" is usually justified by reference to state security, the public interest, and good taste. Contemporary democracies that pride themselves on freedoms enjoyed by their people, including the right of free expression, often enshrined in law — for example, the First Amendment to the US Constitution — usually regard the term with wholly negative connotations.<sup>563</sup> In this post-scriptural secular society, censorship plays a part in even the most enlightened and progressive of societies, its legitimacy deriving from an assumed consensus on what is and is not acceptable at a particular time. Organizations of all kinds have certain secrets that need to be protected for reasons of security, confidentiality, and personal privacy. Such information will be "classified" to some degree, and be restricted to those authorized to receive it. Problems arise when the censoring of information is believed to be against the wider public interest, insofar as it is used to conceal incompetence, corruption, and crime.

Art in all its forms has always been prone to censorship, often due to the desire of artists to extend the boundaries of taste and to challenge authority. For example, in the British theater it was not until 1968 that managements ceased having to submit manuscripts of plays for approval by the official censor. Censorship now in the imperialist and Zionist controlled and influenced countries has morphed into corporate control and capitalist priorities that are deep-rooted in the decisions of public officials and chief executive



officers. Some film and video recordings are usually previewed by a board of censors before being released for public consumption, with cuts if required. Since 1972 the monthly periodical *Index of Censorship* has campaigned against abuses of the fundamental right of free expression throughout the world.

Those people who consider the political left to be somehow better off in this area should recall the privately circulated editions of book-length and shorter texts, usually reproduced from typescript, not authorized for publication by state censorship in the former Soviet Union. The publishing of such work abroad was known as *tamizdat*.

Let it be known from the understanding of the *āyah*, **“Allah does not like anyone going public with offensive language unless he be aggrieved...”** that all public expression and speech through whichever media outlet has to be decent, civilized, and agreeable with the standards of Qur’anic morality. The only exception to this rule occurs when a harassed and ill-treated person or party speaks out against tyranny, injustice, and abuse. This makes it a public duty for people, once they become victims who suffer from social and official tyranny, to speak out with “vitriolic words” against the source of oppression, the center of despotism, and the structure of *zulm* (injustice and inequality). Words of truth coming from vexed and tormented persons, even though they may use rough language, impolite expressions, or even improper speech are the exception, not the rule. But this may be a way to emphasize how serious a matter oppression is; and it is a sure way to mobilize public opinion against dictators and totalitarians.

This permission to use less than delicate words is confined to a particular context: a party is a victim of injustice, there are officials or functionaries who are responsible for this injustice, and the injustice has become so oppressive that “bad words pale” beside the harm, injury, and pressure that have resulted from this form of consistent and prevalent *zulm*. The intent here is to publicize a crime that has taken its toll on its human subjects. The Qur’an in this *āyah* is clearly exposing the sponsors of social mistreatment and personal molestation. Silence or “timid language” does not help in dis-

mantling the edifice of oppression. The crime has to be exposed so that it can be redressed — even if that means using harsh and spiteful language, which would otherwise be self-censored due to the moral character of Muslims and the high standards of an Islamic public discourse. The disparaging words coming from the victims of oppression are meant to denounce and indict specific policy makers and decision makers who are macro-managing the state of oppression. If that leads to an arraignment and an impeachment of these types, then so be it; and similarly, if that leads to a revolt and a revolution, then it is up to the people who suffer under oppression to decide what route they are willing to take. A system of injustice with its sponsors has no room in an Islamic society and state.

In an Islamic life, the people are protected, their civic standing is attended to, and their reputation is preserved as long as there is no evidence to challenge the honesty and credibility of those who are presumed innocent until proven guilty. Going public with information and proof, even if indecorous and indelicate words are used by the victims, is the exception in this case. This is how far the Qur'an is willing to go to accommodate the impulse for justice in human nature. This of course does not give a victim the license to go around building a vocabulary of offensive language and maintaining that nomenclature as a standard. Absolutely not. Injustice cannot become a rationalization for immorality or foul language. And on this note the *āyah* ends with, **“And Allah is, of course, all-hearing, all-knowing.”**

After injustice is identified and the public becomes aware of it as should be possible in an Islamic way of life, it would be preferable for everyone to take corrective action and put the bad chapter of injustice behind, **“Whether you do good in public or in private, or pardon others for offenses [done against you]: for, behold, Allah is for sure an absolver of sins, infinite in His power.”**

This is obviously the way to relieve society from internal civil strife and warfare. The moral pressure of public opinion has to gel into such a momentum that the deviant and tyrannical ruler feels he is eligible for the people's amnesty and forgiveness. If that happens — and there is no reason it should not happen — then every-

one is coached by these *āyāt* to settle what was previously a chapter of tyranny by relieving its executors of their responsibilities and assuming a mature degree of social mobilization that spares society civil wars and internal turmoil. Whether it is this type of graceful social adjustment as a public movement or whether it occurs behind the scenes, **“...and when you pardon [those] others for their offenses [when they were ruling arbitrarily] against you, remember Allah is indeed the One who pardons offenses as His power is immeasurable.”**

This lesson was meant to exercise our minds on the context of oppression, on the administrators of oppression, and on the victims of oppression. It does not appear to be talking about individuals who are ordinary “citizens” or people who have no decision-making capacity in their social life. This lesson is in a climate of previous *āyāt* that speak about social classes, decision makers, and the construction of state and society. For this writer, it has become a joyless comment to say that many Muslims have reduced the scope of these *āyāt* to simple one-on-one encounters between ordinary and average Muslims, thereby excluding the major figures intended to be identified by these *āyāt*: the rulers, the administrators, and the executors of injustice and autocracy. Now, if ever, is the time to expand the horizons of these *āyāt* in our minds and to be brave enough to single out those high ranking potentates who, before anyone else, come under the purview of these lessons. In this regard, the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

*“Lend support to your brother when he is oppressive and when he is oppressed.”* The people listening to him asked, “We understand how to lend him support when he is oppressed, but how do we lend him support when he is an oppressor?” He replied, *“You restrain him from practicing oppression; that amounts to helping him [out].”*<sup>564</sup>

## Commitment to Prophets Is Either an All or None Affair

Indeed, those who are in denial of Allah and His Apostles by endeavoring to make a differentiation between [commitment to] Allah and [commitment to] His Apostles, and who say, “We are committed to one but we reject the other,” and want to pursue a “middle course” — it is they, they who are truly disputing the truth, and for those who dispute the truth [of this matter], We have readied inglorious agony. But as for those who faithfully commit to Allah and His Apostles and make no differentiation between any of them — unto them, in time, will He grant their earnings [in full]. And Allah is indeed much-forgiving, gracious (4:150–152).

This unit of instruction speaks to a problem embedded in scriptural history. And the problem is the unwillingness of people who have received previous scriptures to acknowledge the authenticity of later scriptures. The root problem begins with the Jews who claim a type of monopoly on “their” prophets. From this viewpoint they refuse to acknowledge the revelation and inspiration in the life and glory of Jesus (ﷺ). And being consistent, but wrong, they also extend their denial of authenticity to Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Qur’an. This problem is not only peculiar to Jews but also extends itself to “Christians” who refuse to acknowledge the validity of Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Qur’an, admitting only to the correctness of Jesus (ﷺ) and going beyond that to deifying him. Without any reasoned or reasonable judgement these “Christians” dismiss the prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ) and the scriptural status of the Qur’an.

These far-reaching *āyāt* take issue with and discredit this ill-conceived position of theirs. This Qur’an with its incontestable author emphasizes the inclusive and panoramic scope of Allah (ﷻ) and His Messengers (ﷺ). To this end there are no multiple scriptures of varying central themes that were imparted by God to His Prophets (ﷺ); and there is no discrimination between one prophet and another. God, scriptures, and prophets in the Qur’anic

presentation of the facts are, so to speak, one package. It is this historical consolidation of scripture, unity of prophetic purpose, and a logical and orderly relationship between Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophets (ﷺ) that makes Islam — in the holistic sense, not in the ritualistic sense — the one and only *dīn*.

The most basic appraisal of Islam substantiates that a singular God has given a singular message to humanity. This message was delivered through a common and interchangeable effort shared by all of Allah's Prophets (ﷺ). A clear perception of Allah (ﷻ) by humans does not tolerate the notion that God is sending conflicting signals to humanity: once of the centrality of a "chosen race," and then at another time of the so-called "holy trinity," etc. Be that as it may, there are "Jews" and "Christians" who do not consider the history of prophets to be a uniform and harmonious one. Likewise, these Jews and Christians regard their holy books to be unaffiliated with other scriptures. They do not have it within their religious capacity to evaluate the whole history of prophets and scriptures and realize that this history is corroborative and symmetrical. The scriptural message, in essence, has always been one and the same because its divine source has always been one and the same.

The *āyah* above points to this irregularity among the Judeo-Christians who want to, in a sense, drive a wedge between Allah (ﷻ) and His Apostles (ﷺ) by saying they believe in God but are nonetheless noncommittal when it comes to His Apostles (ﷺ). Such a Judeo-Christian attitude may exhibit itself as a type of "religious" discrimination between one prophet and another, with them believing in some prophets but not in others. This segregation between God and His Prophets (ﷺ) on the one hand, and within the fellowship of prophets on the other hand amounts to a practical rejection of the truth and the facts. Those people who begin to distance God from all His Prophets (ﷺ) and demonstrate a favoritism for some prophets while ignoring or disavowing others are guilty of *kufri*; their half-hearted and partial acknowledgments will not do.

A faithful commitment to Allah (ﷻ) is first and foremost an acknowledgment of Allah's (ﷻ) oneness, uniformity, and unity. This, when extended into human history, means that His scriptures

and revelations, and Prophets and Apostles (ﷺ) do not conflict in any way whatsoever. It is not godly to require different societies in the course of human history to observe conflicting beliefs and standards, all of which are claimed to come from God. Therefore, if Allah (ﷻ) is One — and He is — then His scripture is one. This would also mean that the prophets throughout the human aggregate of past events belong to the same team. They were all working together because they shared the same central scriptural theme; they were not inventing scriptures and they were not fabricating expedencies. This unvarying and blended history is a reflection of Allah's (ﷻ) oneness. Understanding and approaching Allah (ﷻ) with this truth becomes *tawhīd*. Any attempt at breaking up this undifferentiated and uniform history is a denial of its integrity and homogeneity.

Some people would still want to say they believe in some of it and not in other parts of it. That assertion is similar to the suggestion that one believes in an airplane's engines and thrust but does not believe in its pilots and crew members. If aviation is a mission that requires multiple and cooperative uniform tasks, one cannot believe in it and then begin to repudiate or deny some of its major functional components. The same is equally true of the wholeness and unity of *īmān* (faithful commitment) — and the *āyah* above makes this abundantly clear. No one may selectively, conveniently, or selfishly believe in some aspects of “divine commitment” and then dismiss whatever else that does not agree with him. The consequences are terrifying, **“...it is they, they who are really denying the truth: and for those who deny the truth [of this matter] We have prepared a degrading torment.”**

Muslims who blend into the meanings of this Qur'an are the ones whose commitment is to Allah (ﷻ) and the corps of Prophets (ﷺ) without exception and without prejudice toward any of them. Muslims regard and honor all of Allah's Prophets and Apostles (ﷺ) without the kind of partiality that prevents objective consideration. Likewise, all scriptures of divine origin are on an equal par. If, however, the words and ideas of man are interjected into divine scripture, then these hybrid products become questionable and objectionable. However man has chosen to contaminate previous

revelations, the unpolluted Qur'an confirms the underlying fact: Allah (ﷻ) is One, He endorses His revealed and unsplintered word, and He has tasked a set of apostles who fulfill the task of faithfully communicating His unchangeable word to man in the course of human history. This cooperative community of prophets extends from Noah to Abraham to Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, and the many other prophets and messengers (ﷺ) who shared the same responsibilities and task. All of them were motivated by one source and it was moving in a consistent direction. It does not behoove God to be understood in irreconcilable and illogical ways when the matter is as simple as it is. This integration does not tolerate prejudice, breakaway attitudes, or indifference. The legacy will continue with its own God-given momentum even if there is a formidable structure of bigotry and partiality in its way,

**But for those who faithfully commit to Allah and His Apostles and make no segregation between any of them — to them, in time will He grant their earnings [in full]. And surely Allah is oft-forgiving, merciful (4:152).**

There is no room here for admitting people who have erroneous ideas and false faith pertaining to these facts that come to man from His Maker and Creator. As much as human togetherness is desirable, what is more worthy is the adherence to truth and to Allah (ﷻ). And this is the peculiar position that the committed Muslims of all times find themselves in. Besides, theologians and institutions that have twisted and disfigured scripture and truth may act as elements of destruction if they are inside an “Islamic committed front.”

At the end of the day, Muslims in a confident and patent way will have to assume their leadership position in this historical movement and realize that they are destined to be the best representation of the consolidated human will. The mantle of leadership is not bestowed on those who claim to be born Muslims but on those Muslims who have a clear vision of where they have been in this God-defined struggle and where they are going in this same

and uninterrupted struggle for the predominance and preeminence of Allah (ﷻ).

Unlike fragmented Jews and Christians, Muslims who are the product of this Book and Muhammad (ﷺ) realize that humanity has not gone this far to end up denying God and wondering about an uncertain future. The conflicting political and social theories of man cannot move the human condition forward as they have, once and again, failed. It is the history-spanning Qur'an that integrates all of Allah's Prophets (ﷺ) together, binds the fundamental messages of scripture, and incorporates all these efforts around the uniqueness and oneness of Allah (ﷻ). This is what qualifies to give continuity to the epic jihad that traverses the course of time and societies from the first to the last generations on earth. The forces of evil cannot be challenged by splintered interpretations of scripture, or by dismemberment of the prophetic team of apostles throughout history, or by splitting Allah's (ﷻ) engagement with mankind through a prejudiced understanding of Allah (ﷻ) and His Messengers (ﷺ), in which some "religious" Jews and Christians elevate some prophets while denigrating others. It can be only Qur'anic and Muhammadi Muslims who are able to inherit this mantle and press forward with the unfinished responsibilities of history and scripture.

This ancient and modern task awaits people who are the composition and the construction of Allah's (ﷻ) word — the Qur'an. In this context, exclusivist Jews and exclusionary Christians are divisive and schismatic. They do not qualify to carry the burden of prophethood and the task of scripture forward. They stand in violation of the harmony between Allah (ﷻ) and His Apostles (ﷺ), and as segregationists among the prophets themselves.

### **The Enduring Israeli Role in the Persecution of Prophets**

The following deterrent example, within the clear vision already established by the bright words of this Qur'an, once again brings the attitude and social behavior of the Yahūd into our Qur'anic consciousness. These Yahūd are the subjects who never fail to show how



they have failed Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophets (ﷺ). They demonstrated this trait to Muhammad (ﷺ) as they pestered him to authenticate himself through physical miracles. This behavior appears as an extension of the equivalent behavior with Moses (ﷺ), as well as with Jesus and his immaculate mother Maryam (ﷺ). The scriptural sketch of these Yahūdī is decisive: their posture is legendary, even proverbial. By reading and understanding the *āyāt* in this lesson, the reader should begin to ascertain that the shenanigans of the Yahūdī generation around Moses (ﷺ) are the same as the chicaneries of the Yahūdī generation around Jesus (ﷺ), and still the same as the trickery of the Yahūdī generation around Muhammad (ﷺ). These *āyāt* bring them all into comparability and correspondence. The reader should follow the words and meanings carefully,

**The followers of the Old Testament demand of you [O Prophet] that you cause a revelation to be sent down to them from heaven. And an even greater thing than this did they demand of Moses when they said, “Make us see Allah face to face,” whereupon the thunderbolt of punishment overtook them for this, their brazenness. After that, they referred to the [golden] calf — and this after all evidence of the truth had come to them!**

Nonetheless, We effaced this [sin of theirs], and vouchsafed unto Moses a clear proof [of the truth], raising Mount Sinai high above them in witness of their solemn pledge. And We said to them, “Enter the gate humbly”; and We told them, “Do not break the Sabbath-law”; and We accepted from them a most solemn pledge.

And so, [We punished them] for the breaking of their pledge; and their refusal to acknowledge Allah’s messages; and their slaying of prophets against all right; and their boast, “Our hearts are already full of knowledge” — no, but Allah has sealed their hearts in result of their denial [of His subtle power], and [now] they believe in but a few things; and for their refusal

to acknowledge the truth [of Allah's accurate power], and the awesome calumny that they utter against Mary; and their boast, "Behold, we have slain the Christ Jesus, son of Mary, [who claimed to be] an apostle of Allah!"

However, they did not slay him, and neither did they crucify him, but it only seemed to them [as if it had been] so; and, surely, those who hold conflicting views thereon are indeed confused, having no [real] knowledge thereof, and following mere conjecture. For, of a certainty, they did not slay him: no, Allah exalted him unto Himself — and Allah is indeed almighty, wise.

Yet there is not one of the followers of earlier revelation who does not, at the moment of his death, grasp the truth about Jesus; and on the Day of Resurrection he [himself] shall bear witness to the truth against them.

So, then, for the persecution committed by those who followed the Jewish faith did We deny them certain of the good things of life which [in the past] had been allowed to them; and [We did this] for their having so often turned away from the path of Allah, and [for] their taking usury although it had been forbidden to them, and their wrongful devouring of other people's wealth. And for those from among them who [continue to] deny the truth [of Allah's exquisite power] We have set up grievous suffering (4:153–161).

At a time when accusations of anti-Semitism are handily and liberally cast at anyone who dares to speak the truth about the Yahūd, the Muslims, who belong to the house of scripture, ought to feel no inhibitions on reiterating and amplifying Allah's (ﷻ) words, especially insofar as they pertain to correcting these recalcitrant members of the same house.<sup>565</sup> Let us begin by saying plainly and intelligibly that the historical Yahūd have shown nothing but hatred and hostility toward Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Qur'anic mission in Arabia at its inception. And the contemporary Yahūd have

not let up on their belligerent and offensive position toward the Qur'an and its conversational commensurate, Muhammad (ﷺ). Behind the scenes, in organizing the *munāfiqs* inside of Madinah and in unifying the Arabian *mushriks* under the influence of the Quraysh in Makkah, they were more active than they were in the front lines of hostility and aggression. The *āyāt* in this Qur'an from section to section and from volume to volume reinforce the extent of this Yahūdī malice and animus. Some of this territory has already been covered in *Sūrah*s *al-Baqarah* and *Āl 'Imrān*, as well as in the previous *āyāt* of this *sūrah*.

In this lesson, it is their intransigence that is on display when they came to Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) and bade him to have a script come to them straightaway from heaven. They wanted a physical and palpable book to come down to their own hands directly from the domain of God and the angels. They seemed to be eager to feel it and touch it with their own hands, **“The folks of the Old Testament stipulate that you [O Muhammad] induce a holy Writ to be sent down to them from heaven.”** The answer to this type of chutzpah is in Allah's (ﷻ) immediate answer, which further highlights the Yahūdī penchant for aggressive boldness and unmitigated effrontery. We are apprized of this same audacity in their behavior with Moses (ﷺ), whom they claim is “theirs.” So it should come as no shock that they refuse to acknowledge the prophethood of 'Isā and Muhammad (ﷺ).

One thing constant and unabating about the Yahūd is the doggedness of their attitude and behavior — as wrong and as wicked as it is. There is an offensive pattern to their behavior with the Prophets of God (ﷺ). Their contemporary incarnations are an echo of their ancients. They seem to be obsessed with physical and palpable demonstrations of miracles. They seem to come to reason only after they have suffered and been hammered by pressure and persecution. They also appear to show a propensity for breaking their pledge and dishonoring their covenant. They show no honor for their word with God and no honor for their word with man. Their human nature recoils from the notion of being inferior to Allah (ﷻ) and being equal with other peoples. They justify moral-

ity within their own circle while justifying immorality outside of it, and a consequence of this position is that they go on to consume other people's wealth with a religious argument.

These hypersensitive and politically opportunistic Yahūdī loudmouths — who squeal anti-Semitism every time they hear criticism and disapproval of their contempt for other people, especially their hate of Islamic leadership, Islamic self-representation, and Islamic self-determination — should be advised that these words from heaven concerning their social and political behavior are not going to be suppressed or silenced because of their Yahūdī tantrums. All Muslims of self-confidence and conscience should say it in plain language: this thoughtful Qur'an exposes the error-prone mentality of the Yahūd and it leaves no gap in their historical continuum of defying prophets and defiling scripture. The sheer volume of *āyāt* that speak about this Yahūdī trait is needed to form a lasting imprint on the public Muslim mind lest it lose sight of these chimerical biblicals. The Yahūd have not given up, they have not slowed down, and they have not ceased their hate, anti-defamation, and racist character when it comes to Islam and the full-fledged representation of Islam from the days of ancient prophets to our current moment. Listen to and think of these words of Allah (ﷻ), **“The biblical folks will stipulate that you [O Muhammad] bring down a Book for them from the sky!”** Thus, you (Muhammad – ﷺ) should not be concerned with this type of preposterous and zany challenge; this should not surprise you, **“...because an even more out-of-the-ordinary demand did they ask of Moses when they said [to him], “Make us see Allah face to face.”**

With all the miracles that the Yahūd experienced with Moses (ﷺ) they still wanted more. It seems like their senses are in constant demand of miracles — the more their senses experience miracles the more they express satisfaction with God. Miracles became the fuel of their faith; and thus if there are no miracles, then there is no faith; and if there are no miracles — as far as they are concerned — then there is no God! In a sense it would seem like a theater of the absurd: a miracle performance is required on stage by a prophet for them to proceed with their faith responsibilities and duties.

Sometimes, they themselves define what that miracle shall be; and so on one occasion they told Moses (ﷺ), **“Show us God so that we can see Him with our own eyes!” (4:153)**. Obviously, this type of behavior does not come from people who are intimate with Allah (ﷻ), who observe Him in their conscience, who remember Him in their minds, and who consider Him in everything they do. Their demands and pestering the prophets for miracles upon miracles in generation after generation is a way of dishonoring the Sustainer and mocking His Prophets (ﷺ), **“...whereupon the bolt of lightning overtook them because of their umbrage.”** The word *ṣā'iqāh* in the *āyah* could mean a *thunderbolt* or a *bolt of lightning*, and it can also mean a *shock*, a sudden state of violent emotional disturbance or an unpleasant or disappointing surprise. The *āyah* therefore tolerates the interpretation that these Yahūd were by means of a natural or environmental upheaval shocked out of their manic social mentality, that is, the harassment of prophets for the production of miracles. And still, they, after a lapse of time, would revert back to their abiding character in generations to come, teasing other prophets to produce multiple and “faith-sustaining” miracles. They never quit.

In the course of this tortured history, Allah (ﷻ) did pardon them from time to time. Allah (ﷻ) responded favorably to the entreaties of Moses (ﷺ) to forgive the Children of Israel. Another angle on this history in a later *sūrah* puts it this way,

**And Moses chose out of his people seventy men to come [and pray for forgiveness] at a time set by Us. Then, when violent trembling seized them, he prayed, “O my Sustainer! Had You so willed, You would have destroyed them before this, and me [with them]. Will You destroy us for what the weak-minded among us have done? [All] this is but a trial from You, whereby You allow to go astray whom You will, and guide aright whom You will. You are near to us: grant us, then, forgiveness and have mercy on us, for You are the best of all forgivers! And ordain You for us what is good in**

**this world as well as in the life to come: behold, to You have we turned in repentance!” (7:155–156).**

With this history of the Yahūd demanding miracles and Allah (ﷻ) pardoning them for their provocative demands, these Yahūd never ceased to return to their original positions of heckling the prophets and disobeying Allah (ﷻ), **“And after that, they espoused the [golden] calf — and this after all evidence of the truth had come to them!”**

According to Jewish historical sources, the golden calf amounted to a golden idol fashioned by Aaron, Moses’ (ﷺ) brother, on the demand of the Israelis who had become impatient during Moses’ (ﷺ) long absence on Mt. Sinai. The calf was incinerated by Moses (ﷺ) who ground the gold to dust and subsequently secured divine forgiveness for the Israelis (Exodus, 32). The sin of the golden calf, immediately after the giving of the Law, was regarded as the primary offense of the Hebrew Jewish people.

In the narrative of this tried and true Qur’an it was the Sāmiri (the Samaritan) who had crafted the golden calf out of the jewelry the Israelis had appropriated from Egyptian women through legal gimmicks when they were forced out of Egypt.<sup>566</sup> And now these Israelis or Yahūdīs, who should have known better, and who had previous experience with the moral code and standards of monotheism, and who at least were expected to be of a scriptural quality, set out to adore and worship a god made of gold in the image of a calf. All it took for that to happen was the departure of Moses (ﷺ) for days and weeks to approach and adjoin with Allah (ﷻ), at the end of which He received the tablets and the commandments. Despite all these violations, infractions, and misdemeanors, Allah (ﷻ) amnestied these Yahūd, **“Nonetheless, We effaced this [sin of theirs]...”**

But, consistent with their obstreperous character, the Yahūd were not going to appreciate Allah’s (ﷻ) forgiveness, as they did not acknowledge the magnitude of their offensive behavior and deviant ways. If they were feeling or expressing gratitude for Allah’s (ﷻ) exoneration and amnesty they would have corrected their

behavior and done all within their means not to repeat such infringements and infractions. Hence, Allah (ﷻ) moves us through these words of the Qur'an so as to make us absorb their meanings and avoid the complex mental orientation consistent with the twisted meanings and tortured experiences that characterize the psychology and the strategy of the Yahūd,

**And We made accessible to Moses visible leverage, raising Mount Sinai high above them in witness of their solemn pledge. And We said to them, “Enter the gate with humility”; and We told them, “Do not violate the Sabbath”; and We accepted from them a most solemn pledge (4:153–154).**

The leverage or the power to act effectively that was made available to Mūsá (ﷺ) by Allah (ﷻ) was in all likelihood the legal code he obtained in the form of the Tablets of the Law or the Ten Commandments.<sup>567</sup> In other words, this is the legal and moral code conferred on earth by heaven. It comprises God's laws unto mankind. In Islamic terminology, this is called the Shari'ah. All other legal codes initiated by secular man or decorated by scriptural words boil down to systems of law that have no validity and no legitimacy. The main reason for this is that these secular legal establishments have no extension into the heart of man and no roots in his conscience. It, therefore, should be normal and natural for unpolluted souls to dismiss man-made laws that have no scriptural basis and no divine inspiration. That, to some extent, explains why man-made laws, secular legal systems, and codes sponsored by the corporate mindset have to be protected by police and military forces. A professional army is needed to protect and preserve secular jurisprudence. The local police force teams up with the regional legal system, which in turn is part and parcel of the national or federal government, all of them combining to produce a secular establishment that enforces its laws to protect its interests — with nary a thought about what God has to say about these affairs. Unlike the legal codes underwritten by temporal power regimes to maintain

their dominance, God-given laws have a moral basis, and a place in the human heart; thereby they have a self-regulating popularity that takes shape in the form of a social *taqwá* and displaces the need and finances for security forces and military establishments.

Here, and who knows for how many times, the Yahūd do not come through with sensitive hearts, refined feelings, and an understanding of the meaning, quality, or magnitude of these God-given laws. At this point in their affront to Allah (ﷻ) they were presented with a physical punishment that corresponded to their materially centered world. And thus coinciding with their stubborn and unmanageable attitude was a stubborn and unmanageable punishment. They looked and saw a landmass (mount) hovering over their heads, on the verge of collapsing over them if they did not conform and comply with God's covenant, that is, if they did not apply the laws — the Ten Commandments — they had now been entrusted with. It took this type of existential threat to compel the Yahūd to comply with God and to honor their word in committing to the covenant. It took solid rock that threatened their very lives to tenderize the rock solid hearts they had in their bosoms.

The solemn pledge they had made with God was for them to enter the Temple in humility, and to proclaim and laud the Sabbath.<sup>568</sup> Their point of greatest weakness was to allow commercialism to intrude into the Sabbath. So when the imminent threat of the collapsing mountain disappeared, their impending fear of death also dissipated, along with the terror of the associated accountability for what they had committed to do. Then these Yahūd, absorbed as they are with their “chosen status” mentality, felt they “could not” be punished by God and released themselves from their covenant obligations. So long as there was no threatening scourge close at hand, they felt they were free to go on with their lives as they pleased. This Yahūdī attitude designates a human psychology that bounces, for its own self-rationalized survival purposes, between the miracle (the carrot) and the threat (the stick). Anytime in their history they have not been fed a constant diet of miracles or threats they have surfaced with their true character, which seems to find a morbid type of fulfilment in God-denial and



prophet persecution. At times, their extreme behavior has exhibited as the outright defiance of God, while at other times as the murder of His Prophets (ﷺ). They have even come out and said publicly, in effect, that their hearts are impervious to advice and guidance (4:155), that there is no need to speak to them because words do not penetrate into their composition, that their hearts are put away and shut away. The events and accompanying attitudes recounted here to the Prophet (ﷺ) and all Muslims are just a few of the countless instances that make up their emotionally and mentally tormented history. We have only to listen and learn,

**[We punished them] for the breaking of their pledge, and their refusal to acknowledge Allah's *āyāt* [His power presence in human affairs], and their killing of prophets against all right, and their boast, "Our hearts are already sealed [with what we have of knowledge, which is not amenable to what you have of knowledge]..." (4:155).**

Listen to how they responded to Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Qur'an, **"Our hearts are already sealed."** Where is the humility of the Sabbath, the experience of history, or the knowledge of the Law? They behave as if they know it all, not needing anyone to speak to them about God or scripture. As opposed as they are to listening to anything anyone is telling them, they may be feeding off some erroneous psychological "high" that is a byproduct of "knowing it all," their self-appointed "chosen people" status, or the stance that they have nothing to learn from gentiles. It is this self-induced and self-generated arrogance and detachment from the rest of the human race that has condemned the Yahūd to their pathetic history. To this end Allah (ﷻ) says, **"Allah has closed their hearts with a seal as a result of their denying Him [his power presence in man's affairs], and [now] they suffer from a commitment deficit."**

Their hearts and senses were not created to shut off once revelation and scripture are presented to them; rather their hearts close down because of the intent and the willpower they have

deliberately deployed to look the other way when Allah (ﷻ) is speaking, to oppose His Prophets (ﷺ) when they are speaking, or just to behave as if they are in no need of God and His mercy. However, there have been exceptions to this rule; some individual Jews had the courage of conscience to step out of this nonsensical Yahūdī compulsion and preoccupation, and acknowledge the truth. In the time of Muhammad (ﷺ), they included ‘Abdullāh ibn Salām, Tha‘labaḥ ibn Sa‘yaḥ, Asad ibn Sa‘yaḥ, and Asad ibn ‘Ubaydillāh, all of whom are to be acclaimed with honor.

### Was Jesus (ﷺ) Killed by the Israelis and the Romans?

The candid *āyāt* continue to reiterate why these Yahūd deserve denunciation and punishment. They have brought it upon themselves. The more they demand from Allah (ﷻ) the more Allah (ﷻ) expects from them. More — much more — can be added to the list of Yahūdī gall and malice,

**...and for their refusal to acknowledge the truth [of Allah’s power presence in human creation], and the stunning calumny they utter against Mary, and their boast, “Behold, we have slain the Christ Jesus, son of Mary, [who claimed to be] an apostle of Allah!” (4:156–157).**

Every time these Yahūd have gone against God they have gained the notorious description of *kufr*. When they, without sanction or conscience, killed prophets they were labeled with the designation of *kufr*. There can be no justification or rationale for killing a prophet. In an effort to delegitimize the mission of Jesus (ﷺ), it was this demented Yahūdī psychology that went public with unspeakable things about the immaculate Mary, the mother of Jesus (ﷺ). At one time they said that she committed adultery with Joseph, the carpenter, for which they incurred damnation for their words and themselves. They continue to take credit for — and brag about (!) — killing Jesus (ﷺ), the Messiah, and crucifying him.

When they say they killed Jesus, the son of Mary (ﷺ), they say so sarcastically and jeeringly, not believing he is the Messiah at all.

According to the Talmud, Jesus (ﷺ) was executed by a “proper” rabbinical court for idolatry, inciting other Jews to idolatry, and contempt of rabbinical authority.<sup>569</sup> All classical Jewish sources that mention his execution are quite happy to take responsibility for it; in the Talmudic account the Romans are not even mentioned. The more popular accounts, which were nonetheless taken quite seriously, such as the notorious *Toledot Yeshu*, are even worse, for in addition to the above criminal charges they accuse him of witchcraft.<sup>570</sup> The very name *Jesus* was for Jews a symbol of all that is abominable, and this popular tradition still persists. The Gospels are equally detested, and they are not allowed to be quoted, let alone taught, even in modern Israeli Jewish schools.

As the Qur’an begins to set things straight on this most detestable chapter in Judeo-Christian history, it cannot be overemphasized enough at the outset that the Talmud and the Talmudic literature, quite apart from the general anti-gentile streak running through them, contain very offensive statements and precepts directed specifically against Christianity. For example, in addition to a series of scurrilous sexual allegations against Jesus (ﷺ), the Talmud states that his punishment in Hell consists of him being immersed in boiling excrement — a statement not exactly calculated to endear the Talmud to Christians or Muslims.

This matter of whether the Jews of the time had a hand in the death of Jesus (ﷺ), as related in the common history of Jews and Christians, still remains a matter of serious disagreement, denial, and assertion. Whatever their differences are — and they are significant — the truth of the matter is stated right here in this truth-telling Qur’an,

**However, they did not kill him, and neither did they crucify him, but it only seemed to them [as if it had been] so; and, verily, those who hold conflicting views thereon are indeed confused, having no [real] knowledge thereof, and following mere conjecture. For, of a**

**certainty, they did not kill him; rather, Allah lifted him unto Himself — and Allah is indeed almighty, wise (4:157–158).**

Whether Jesus (ﷺ) was, in fact, killed is a controversial, divisive, and unresolved issue between the Jews and the Christians. No evidence substantiates their official and public versions of this supposed event. The Jews, at least within their own circles (and with the rising power of Israel in the modern day, they have become more brazen about it in public), say they killed him and they deride the fact that he was Allah's Apostle and Prophet (ﷺ). Even if they do refer to him as a "prophet" they do so with sarcasm and ridicule. On the other side of this contentious issue are the Christians who say that he was crucified and buried, and then he arose from the dead after three days. And there is no objective history with verifiable evidence that lends credence to either view in this Judeo-Christian polarization. The fact remains that neither the Jews nor the Christians, when they speak about the "death" of Jesus (ﷺ), speak with certainty, confidence, and the stark truth. The circumstances and exigencies surrounding the last days of Jesus (ﷺ) were so sudden and so confounding that the historical narratives of the event are contradictory, irreconcilable, and mutually exclusive. And endemic to these clashing versions of history is a palpable amount of apprehension, doubt, and uncertainty. The only truth that can be relied upon with certainty is what we are told by Allah (ﷻ), who knows exactly what happened as He is the source of information, knowledge, and truth on this issue and every other. And thank Allah (ﷻ) for this; His final word, the Qur'an, settled a matter that remained unsettled for centuries, and has its adjuncts with deleterious consequences today.

The gospel accounts of the last days of Jesus (ﷺ) are also stigmatized by a heavy dose of human bias; they were all written many years after Jesus (ﷺ) departed, and to complicate matters, the chroniclers — his disciples, followers, and believers — found themselves in circumstances of persecution and oppression. These types of disturbed, pitiless, and harsh social conditions are not conducive

to an objective and well-researched work that would reproduce the facts as they actually occurred and the events as they truly unraveled. A generation or two after the absence of Jesus (ﷺ), his adherents and champions were living in fear, wanted by the powers that be, and moving about incognito. In a sense, they were living in what today is known as an “underground.” Another variable seldom mentioned in this regard is the fact that, besides the four official gospels existing in public circulation today and forming the bulk of the New Testament canon, many other gospels were written.<sup>571</sup> It was a few hundred years after this event of whether Jesus (ﷺ) was killed that the current four circulating gospels were endorsed by what was to become the leading force within Christendom. Near the end of the fourth century CE, the Catholic Church came to recognize a canon that included the four gospels attributed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which had previously been established by a number of regional synods, namely the Council of Rome (382CE), the Synod of Hippo (393CE), and the two Synods of Carthage (397CE and 419CE).<sup>572</sup> From then on these four gospels were made “official,” and for reasons that remain dubious and questionable.

The historical problem of the “four gospels” is sharply posed by the fact that St. Paul, in his lifetime, had more than once opposed the idea of there being more than one Gospel (Galatians, 1:7–9; 2 Corinthians, 11:4). Yet by the time of Justin Martyr (150CE), Christian worship at Rome is described as including a public reading of “the memoirs of the Apostles... called gospels.”<sup>573</sup> About the same time the church was driven to do two things, paradoxically interconnected: it had to delimit the number of “gospels” to the well-known canonical four in the face of apocryphal (of questionable authenticity) and gnostic gospels gaining currency; and it had especially to oppose Marcion’s attempt to appeal to an abbreviated Gospel of Luke as solely authoritative in his canon.<sup>574</sup> And this body of what may be called church officials had to resist the temptation, in a third course of action inspired by Tatian’s *Diatessaron* or *Harmony* (170CE), which ran together the four gospels into a single account, to ignore or deny the plurality of four gospels, each with its own distinctive way of telling the story of Jesus (ﷺ).<sup>575</sup>

In the end, the view that was ultimately adopted was the one in which each gospel was attributed to an apostolic source, whether direct — as in the cases of St. Matthew and St. John, believed to be disciples-Apostles who wrote down their eyewitness reports — or indirect — as in the cases of St. Mark, a follower of St. Peter according to Papias (130CE), and St. Luke, a companion of St. Paul (the “apostle”).<sup>576</sup>

Some of the gospels that never made it into the officially sanctioned Roman (Western) Christian mainstream are the *Gospel of the Nazareans*, the *Gospel of the Ebionites*, the *Gospel According to the Hebrews*, the *Gospel According to the Egyptians*, the *Coptic Gospel of Thomas*, *Papyrus Egerton 2: The Unknown Gospel*, the *Gospel of Peter*, the *Gospel of Mary*, the *Gospel of Philip*, the *Gospel of Truth*, the *Gospel of the Savior*, the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, the *Proto-Gospel of Thomas*, the *Epistle of the Apostles*, the *Coptic Apocalypse of Peter*, the *Second Treatise of the Great Seth*, and the *Secret Gospel of Mark*.

Another gospel that is not recognized by the Rome influenced church is the *Gospel of Barnabas*; in it there is an account that has never received entrenched church recognition, but nevertheless, does not conflict with the incontestable meanings of the Qur’an. The Barnabas account of the last day of Jesus (ﷺ) before he was raised to Allah (ﷻ) is given below,

When the troops arrived with Judas to the place where Jesus was, Jesus heard the approach of a crowd. He then went uneasily into the house. The eleven [disciples] were sleeping. When He [God] saw the danger His servant [Jesus] was in, He ordered [the angels] Gabriel, Michael, Raphael, and His heavenly emissaries to take Jesus with them out of the world. The pure angels arrived. They took him out of the window to the south. They carried him and placed him in the third heaven in the company of angels who are in perpetual praise of God... Judas in an uncontrolled manner went into the room Jesus had been raised from. All the disciples were asleep. And then

God the marvelous performed a miraculous act: Judas had attained the voice of Jesus, his facial features — he became the selfsame as Jesus. So much so that we thought he was Jesus. But he [Judas] awoke us and asked us: where is the mentor, that is, Jesus? He began looking around trying to find Jesus! We were surprised; we answered him [Judas]: You are our mentor. Have you now forgotten us...?<sup>577</sup>

As the words of the Qur'an so carefully put it,

**...and, in fact, those who hold conflicting views thereon are indeed confused, having no [reliable] knowledge thereof, and following mere conjecture. For, of a certainty, they [the Jews and the Romans] did not kill him [Jesus]... (4:157).**

Thus, they are left to their own clashing points of view. The Jews and Christians of today are not clear on this issue because they insist on upholding information that is either fabricated or twisted. None of it corresponds to the facts. The only fact in this matter is the one that is stated in this meticulous Qur'an, **"They did not kill him of a certainty; Allah exalted him unto Himself: and Allah is indeed almighty, wise."**

Beyond this, the Qur'an offers no specific information as to how Jesus (ﷺ) was lifted up and elevated to Allah (ﷻ). Was he literally lifted up in body and soul, or did only his spirit ascend unto Allah (ﷻ), leaving his body behind. Human beings are not apprised of detailed information as to the exact time and place where his body was when all this took place. The established and clear meaning in these *āyāt* is that Jesus (ﷺ) was neither killed, nor crucified. The executed act of "killing" and "crucifying" took place on a look-alike or image of Jesus — but it was not Jesus (ﷺ) himself. This much is abundantly clear. In the previous *sūrah*, Allah (ﷻ) says,

Lo! Allah said, “O Jesus! Verily, I shall cause you to elapse, and shall exalt you unto Me, and cleanse you of [the presence of] those who are bent on denying the truth [of Allah’s power presence]... (3:55).

And still, there are no earthly guideposts of where and when, and how exactly this came to happen. What is known is the fact as stated here in Allah’s (ﷻ) words; what is not known are the material and physical details accompanying this fact. What was the nature and the “laboratory” meaning of this lapse of life (*wafāh*)? When precisely did this take place? No pinpoint information in this regard can be ascertained from the relevant *āyāt*.

We live in a time and a world in which Judeo-Christian ideas and beliefs have, in one way or another, imposed themselves on other cultures and other peoples. One of the Judeo-Christian discrepancies that has had its impact on probably the rest of the world through commercial and corporate giants are the religious holidays, especially Christmas and Easter. The first has to do with the birth of Jesus (ﷺ) and the latter with his so-called crucifixion or death. It behooves us to take an enlightened and Qur’anic view of the practice of crucifixion in general, and its specific application in the matter of Jesus (ﷺ).

Crucifixion is a form of execution conducted by fastening the condemned to two crossed beams. Biblical sources suggest that crucifixion was a Persian practice (Ezra, 6:1–11); the Greeks did not use it. Roman law ordered it for slaves, malefactors, religious and political agitators, murderers, pirates, and others who had no civil rights. Jesus (ﷺ), as a seditionist, could have been crucified, but not St. Paul, a Roman citizen. Crucifixion was intended as a deterrent to crime by the public display of the shame associated with being attached to the cross. Crucifixion was abolished in Europe when Constantine became a Christian (314CE). The Romans most often used a T- or X-shaped cross. Christian tradition favors the Latin cross (*crux immissa*), or T-shaped, as the form of Jesus’ (ﷺ) cross.

Crucifixion, Roman style, as the gospels endorsed by the church illustrate, began with the scourging of the prisoner followed



by his carrying the cross, at least the shorter part of it, to where he was to die. A public place was chosen, often where two or more heavily traveled streets or roads crossed, and with a cemetery conveniently nearby. In the appointed spot, the upright piece was firmly fastened in the ground. The condemned man was then stripped of his clothing and either tied or nailed to the crossbeam, which was then hoisted in place by ropes until the feet were off the ground; sometimes a ledge-like support projected from the upright piece, to denote the position of the crossbeam. The feet were then tied or nailed to the upright piece. A military guard took charge of the entire protocol and remained until death came by exhaustion or heart failure. No vital organs were harmed. The victim was rigidly held in one position unable to deal with heat, cold, muscle cramps, natural bodily functions, hunger, or thirst. Often the crucified died in agony only after a number of days on the cross. Afterward, the body was removed and the cross burned. Nails from crucifixion crosses were used by both the Jews and Romans as means of healing. It is said that during Jesus' (ﷺ) youth, a massive Jewish riot, protesting the king's policies, heavily damaged Sepphoris, Herod Antipas' capital, four miles from Nazareth. In the king's wrathful retaliation, thousands of Jews were crucified along roadways leading to the ruined city.

All this abhorrent and obnoxious information could cause one to lose sight of the context of this whole Judeo-Christian polarization that comes from slanted information and egocentric positions. The point here is to recall the fact that these Yahūd had already killed two of Allah's Prophets, Zakariyā and Yaḥyá (ﷺ).<sup>578</sup> This precedent in Yahūdī history gave them the audacity to make their lethal move against Jesus (ﷺ) whom, to begin with, they never considered an apostle or a prophet. From the fragmentary historical record available, the influential constituencies and temporal power brokers of that ancient society included the Jews as a bloc of people, the Romans as the imperial power, and Pontius Pilate as the Roman imperial czar of the Holy Land.<sup>579</sup> It appears that the Roman authority was less interested in getting rid of Jesus (ﷺ) than were the Yahūdī hierarchy of rabbis. That Jesus (ﷺ) was

keenly aware of the Yahūdī crime pertaining to the murder of Zakariyā and Yaḥyá (ﷺ) may have been the prime motivation for the rabbis to move their empire within the empire to finish Jesus (ﷺ) off. Besides that, they also had their religious opposition to his understanding of scripture; he wanted them to cling to the spirit of scripture and they wanted him to rubber-stamp their literal and material understanding of scripture.

To reiterate, the Yahūd did not consider Jesus (ﷺ) to be a prophet; therefore, killing him was, in their minds, much easier than killing Zakariyā and Yaḥyá who were by their own standards God's Prophets (ﷺ). At this point the astute observer should ask why official and church-made Christianity does not have any position on the Yahūdī persecution and then killing of Prophets Zakariyā and Yaḥyá (ﷺ). Similarly, why do not Roman officialdom and Christian churchdom, once they merged, have a joint position on the "legality" that forced Jesus (ﷺ), in their version of history, to be put on the cross? When there are no positions taken on these pivotal and cardinal issues by those who "deify" Jesus (ﷺ) in theological terms, then it can only be concluded that this same class of ecclesiastical personnel have "deified" secular authorities in ideological terms.

In other words, that ancient Roman authority, which officially condemned Jesus (ﷺ) to death, has to be held accountable and cannot be excluded from this crime in the same way that the Yahūd who got involved in it have to be held accountable. Going further in this direction, there is no justification for formulating a religion (Christianity) with concepts of atonement, repentance, redemption, and a trinity that all evade the issue of justice, which directly indicts these Yahūdī and Roman religious and secular characters — who themselves in any event are not exempt from divine justice. And to cap off this irony, instead of the illegal and immoral assault on Jesus (ﷺ) — a crime in every sense of the word — becoming the focus of attention, it was inconceivably deemed a divine act around which all other concepts of absolution, redemption, and salvation have been strung together to form a religion.

### The Jewish-Christian Polarization about Jesus (ﷺ)

All of the conflicting historical narratives that have led not only to the theological accretions around this crime, but also to the patterns of social reconstruction that turn a blind eye to institutional injustice and official abuse of power, require the kind of clarification that can only come from the Qur'an,

**Yet there is not one of the followers of [earlier] scripture who does not, at the moment of his death, grasp the truth about Jesus, and on the Day of Resurrection he [himself] shall bear witness to the truth against him (4:159).**

The wording of this *āyah* can tolerate two complementary interpretations, “Yet there is not one of the followers of [earlier] scripture who does not, at the moment of his [Jesus'] death, grasp the truth about Jesus...” and “Yet there is not one of the followers of [earlier] scripture who does not, at the moment of his [the follower's] death, grasp the truth about Jesus...” The pronoun *his* in the *āyah* can refer either to Jesus (ﷺ) or to the follower of earlier scripture, namely the Jew and the Christian. In the first understanding of the *āyah*, the truth about Jesus (ﷺ) will be made clear to the Jews and Christians before the death of Jesus (ﷺ), which will occur after he descends back to earth in the final chapter of human history. In the second, every Jew and Christian at the time of his or her death will grasp the truth about Jesus (ﷺ), and commit to that fact. This would mean that in the final minutes of life, when a Jew or a Christian is in the throes of death, the facts about Jesus (ﷺ) will become clear.

Both interpretations of this *āyah* are contained in multiple Islamic historical sources and exegeses of the Qur'an. There may be some desired merit in saying that the Jews — who have all along denied the status of Jesus (ﷺ) as a prophet and apostle, who have maintained that position throughout the length of the past 2,000 years, and who have alleged that they killed him — when they reach the moment of death, when they are on their way to the after-

life, and when their physical presence on earth is in its last stage, at that time they will recognize who he really is. In that final moment of earthly life, they will come or will have come to understand that Jesus (ﷺ) was authentic and his mission legitimate; and in a split-second immediacy they will believe or would have believed in it. Regrettably, though, believing differently and truthfully in that life-end moment will be of no value insofar as the deceaseds' final judgments are concerned, **“And on the Day of Resurrection, he [Jesus] will bear witness [to their worldly character].”**

These *āyāt* altogether dispel the notion of the crucifixion of Jesus (ﷺ) and all the narratives that come with it. Therefore Muslims who cast anchor in this Qur'an are not concerned at all with the uncertainty that comes from the Jewish and Christian narratives. The dubiousness of the Judeo-Christian chronicle of events, such as the anti-Judaism of the Gospel of Mark, which continues in the passion narrative, is irrelevant.<sup>580</sup> When Christians say that this cannot be understood without previously considering Jesus' (ﷺ) three prophecies about his suffering and his resurrection, which are to be found in the Gospel of Mark, Muslims are not interested.<sup>581</sup>

There are, however, passages in some Christian references that carry a sense of the truth, though not necessarily the details. This can be ascertained by comparing these Christian references with Allah's (ﷻ) words in the Qur'an. The synergy between the two is most palpable in the Christian gospel writers' view about Jewish complicity with Roman authority in, and indeed management of, the persecution and ultimate demise of Jesus (ﷺ). In the next few pages, attention is devoted, firstly, to the decidedly anti-Jewish bent of the four canonical gospels, as they basically accuse the Jews of deicide. Secondly, the confusion in the way the information is presented and then later appraised is also highlighted. And finally and most importantly featured, with the particular view of each gospel writer, are the attempts of various revisionist biblical historians and apologists to deconstruct and then “adapt” the plurality of often contradictory and inconsistent historical facts to assuage the guilt of a dependent, but commanding, Jewish power culture that cannot survive without the enabling fortification of

contemporary imperial American and colonial European Christendom. With all of the information heretofore presented, it should go without saying that biblical scholars, especially over the last 200 years, are under pressure on the one hand to distance church theology from justifications supporting the millennial persecution and murder of European Jews by Christians, and on the other hand to produce rationalizations for the reestablishment of Israel by questioning the veracity of the historical record.

From the three prophecies alluded to above, which are apparently in Jesus' (ﷺ) own words, St. Mark's basic conclusion in reporting this information is that Jesus is going to Jerusalem to be put to death by the Jewish authorities. St. Mark offers more supporting information about his view when he gives an account of what happened after a healing performed by the Messiah on the Sabbath, "And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him" (Mark, 3:6, King James Version). Another version of the same passage reads, "So the Pharisees left the synagogue and met at once with some members of Herod's party, and they made plans to kill Jesus" (Mark, 3:6, Good News Translation). The Jewish plan to kill Jesus (ﷺ) runs right through Mark's Gospel like a scarlet thread and is then fulfilled in the passion narrative.<sup>582</sup>

In view of this it is no longer surprising that in the Gospel of Mark all the high priests, elders, and scribes condemn Jesus (ﷺ) to death (Mark, 14:64) and hand him over to Pilate (Mark, 15:1). However, Pilate wants to let Jesus (ﷺ) go, because he "perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up" (Mark, 15:10). But his intention is then thwarted by the Jewish authorities, and thus when Pilate wants to release Jesus (ﷺ), they incite the Jewish people to demand Jesus' (ﷺ) crucifixion,<sup>583</sup>

But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead. And Pilate again said to them, "Then what shall I do with the man whom you call the King of the Jews?" And they cried out again, "Crucify him." And Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil

has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him" (Mark, 15:11–14, Revised Standard Version).<sup>584</sup>

In just one sentence, the Qur'an apprises the Muslims of the confusion and uncertainty riddling the Jewish and Christian views of the last days of 'Īsá (ﷺ); and delving into their competing story lines with the desire to reach some kind of decisive conclusion will just add to the muddle of opinions, spins, prevarications, and scores to settle that inhibit a dispassionate appraisal of the facts. But the purpose here is to give the reader a tip-of-the-iceberg assessment of what actually exists in the Jewish and Christian historical record. More indications of this confusion is evidence that there are those who try to differentiate between the Jewish elite and the Jewish people, suggesting that only the elite were to blame for Jesus' (ﷺ) death, despite the fact that the verse above argues otherwise. Other baffled minds have concluded that the anti-Judaism apparent in St. Mark's interpretation of the Parable of the Vineyard has been intensified in the passion narrative: the Jews — that is, high priests, scribes, elders, Pharisees as well as the people — bear sole responsibility for Jesus' (ﷺ) death.<sup>585</sup>

This tendency then continues brutally in the passion narratives of the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John. The Jewish-Christian polarization only becomes more exacerbated with each gospel, and in the process they both are in need of the words of truth here in this Qur'an. Allah's (ﷻ) pronouncement on the whole affair in the Final Testament, the Qur'an, does indeed diffuse the antagonism between the Jews and Christians, but their exceptionalist orientations anesthetize them to the truth in favor of the hearsay produced by "their own." With the reference point of the Qur'an, they could easily disavow tales such as that of St. Matthew, which, except for a few deviations and additions, is the same as the account of St. Mark, considered by many biblical scholars to be the basis for the other canonical gospels.<sup>586</sup> Some of these additions, with analytical statements from biblical criticism, include:

1. "When Judas, his betrayer [he had betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver], saw that he was condemned, he repented and

brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, 'I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.' They said, 'What is that to us? See to it yourself.' And throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself" (Matthew, 27:3–5). Thus by way of anticipation the action against Jesus (ﷺ) is presented as being reprehensible, and redactionally a devastating verdict is pronounced on the Jews who are hostile to Jesus (ﷺ). If a disciple who has betrayed Jesus (ﷺ) can no longer compensate for his action despite his repentance and therefore must die, that is still nothing by comparison with the high priests and elders, who do not even repent of their action.<sup>587</sup>

2. Pilate's wife tells her husband while he is sitting in the seat of judgment, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much over him today in a dream" (Matthew, 27:19). Hence, a Roman woman becomes witness to Jesus' (ﷺ) innocence, whereas the Jewish people, spurred on by the authorities, call for Jesus' (ﷺ) death. Some Bible critics regard this scene to be sheer invention on St. Matthew's part and therefore consider it important for discovering his intention.<sup>588</sup>
3. When Pilate recognizes that the Jewish people want the crucifixion of Jesus (ﷺ), according to St. Matthew, he takes water, washes his hands before the people and says, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves" (Matthew, 27:24). Accordingly Pilate endorses his wife's judgment: as a righteous man, Jesus (ﷺ) is innocent. This heightens the guilt of the Jews further. The gesture, the performance by a pagan Roman of a Jewish biblical rite of expiation — washing the hands (Deuteronomy, 21:6; Psalms, 26:6) — is very striking, and demonstrates St. Matthew's intention to foist blame for the death of Jesus (ﷺ) on the Jewish people.<sup>589</sup>
4. This intention is fully expressed in the way in which the Jewish people curse themselves — a feature to be found only in Matthew's Gospel — immediately after Pilate washes his hands, "And all the people answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children!'" (Matthew, 27:25). With this verse St.

Matthew is referring back to another verse, “Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly, I say to you, all this will come upon this generation” (Matthew, 23:34–36).

In verse 27:25, in contrast to verse 27:24, where the Greek word *ochlos* is used, St. Matthew uses a term for *the people* — *laos* — that in the Greek Bible generally denotes the special religious position of Israel. Thus, all Israel as the people chosen by Yahweh takes the blame for Jesus’ (ﷺ) death on its shoulders and those of all Jewish generations to come. The Jews could act in this way only because guilt over the death of Jesus (ﷺ) was not a question for them. Granted, Pilate gave the order for the crucifixion, but according to St. Matthew, Israel bears the blame for Jesus’ (ﷺ) death, and because of this it has finally forfeited its election. Even the Jews must assent to this because, convinced of Jesus’ (ﷺ) guilt, they uttered a conditional curse on themselves. But as Jesus’ (ﷺ) innocence is clear, they are responsible for the consequences, so that Jesus’ (ﷺ) blood comes upon them and their children. None of the anti-Jewish statements in the New Testament has provoked so much murder, misery, and despair among Jews in subsequent Church history as this one.<sup>590</sup>

In his account of the trial before Pilate, St. Luke follows St. Mark’s narration, but with significant changes. The following verse has been added to St. Mark’s text, and refers back to another set of verses, below, about paying tax to Caesar,<sup>591</sup>

So they [the scribes and the high priests] watched him, and sent spies, who pretended to be sincere, that they might take hold of what he said, so as to deliver him up



to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor. They asked him, “Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?” But he perceived their craftiness, and said to them, “Show me a coin. Whose likeness and inscription has it?” They said, “Caesar’s.” He said to them, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they were not able in the presence of the people to catch him by what he said; but marveling at his answer they were silent (Luke, 20:20–26).

And they began to accuse him, saying, “We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ a king.” (Luke, 23:2).

By bringing out the connection between verses 23:2 and 20:20–26, St. Luke makes it clear that the accusation by the Jewish authorities is based on a lie — for Jesus (ﷺ) had explicitly endorsed the payment of taxes. The Jewish action against Jesus (ﷺ) is therefore grounded in a malicious calumny, but Pilate did not fall for it. This is clear from his two statements, which St. Luke has similarly added to the Markian narrative,

And Pilate said to the chief priests and the multitudes, “I find no crime in this man” (Luke, 23:4).

Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people; and after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him; neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us. Behold, nothing deserving death has been done by him; I will therefore chastize him and release him” (Luke, 23:13–16).

At the same time, it is clear from these two texts that like his predecessors, St. Luke sees the Jewish elite and the Jewish people as a unity. Therefore the designation, *the Jews*, is also hostile when it is related to this assignation of guilt.<sup>592</sup>

This reaches a climax in St. Luke's assertion that it was the Jews — not the Romans — who executed Jesus (✠). St. Luke glosses over the scourging scene (Mark, 15:16–20) in such a way that Jesus (✠) is taken away immediately after he has been handed over. Accordingly the text has to necessarily be read as,

But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified. And their voices prevailed. So Pilate gave sentence that their demand should be granted. He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, whom they asked for; but Jesus he delivered up to their will.

And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. And there followed him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck!' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?" Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. And when they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on the right and one on the left (Luke, 23:23–33).

It follows from this that those who called for Jesus' (✠) death also executed him. The verse, "...and how our chief priests and rulers

delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him” (Luke, 24:20), confirms that the Third Evangelist (St. Luke) actually thought this. The conclusion to be drawn from St. Luke’s account of the passion is that the anti-Judaism expressed by St. Mark is further heightened, as is the innocence of the Roman Pilate. In both respects St. Matthew and St. Luke independently agree with each other.<sup>593</sup>

The hearing before the Sanhedrin related by all three Synoptic Gospels no longer appears in the Gospel of John.<sup>594</sup> The Fourth Evangelist reports only a hearing before Pilate (John, 18:28–19:16). St. John’s version suggests that Jesus (ﷺ) has been interrogated by the high priest Annas (John, 18:19–24), who hands him over fettered to the high priest Caiaphas (John, 18:24). From there Jesus (ﷺ) goes on to Pilate. The latter has to be concerned with the affair because the Jews brought the prisoner Jesus (ﷺ) to him. On the one hand they appear as accusers before Pilate the judge, and on the other they ask the governor to carry out a valid legal verdict, which they have passed, but not pronounced explicitly. Accordingly, the Jews are depicted in a perplexing way: the hearing before Annas is meant to be a hearing and is not, and that before Pilate is not meant to be one and is, though only materially and not formally. Pilate is involved, not in any public proceedings against Jesus (ﷺ), but in a private interview within the praetorium. The Jews remain outside and learn something about the state of his dealings with the accused only through Pilate. For this purpose he constantly has to run to and fro between the parties, in and out of the praetorium. This is no muddle, but a literary artifice with which the narrator, St. John, creates two different scenes and has the drama played out on two stages. But it also happens in order to involve the Jews in the process from the beginning. For that reason St. John does not have a real hearing before the Sanhedrin. But he inserts the Jews into the account of the Roman trial and thus intensifies their guilt.<sup>595</sup>

Although there is no real hearing before the Sanhedrin, the Jews are directly involved in the trial of Jesus (ﷺ). Moreover, they are incriminated more directly because they have handed over

Jesus (John, 18:35), and Jesus (☩) explicitly presents this as wickedness, "...therefore he who delivered me to you [Pilate] has the greater sin" (John, 19:11). The exoneration of Pilate goes hand in hand with the heightened attribution of guilt to the Jews. Pilate expresses his conviction of Jesus' (☩) innocence several times (John, 18:38; 19:4,6) and repeatedly attempts to set the prisoner free (John, 18:39; 19:1–5, 12).<sup>596</sup>

In John's Gospel, the apologetics at work toward the Roman state at the expense of the Jews are further intensified in the Gospel of Peter, which appears to have been written at the beginning of the second century CE. St. Peter's rendition suggests that Pilate is a friend of Joseph of Arimathea and thus indirectly a friend of Jesus (☩). At the beginning of the third century, the church fathers Tertullian and Origen finally depict the Roman governor as a Christian!<sup>597</sup>

Further historical investigation can be conducted only on the basis of source criticism. Literary-critical analysis leads to the verdict that both Matthew and Luke, and probably also John, are dependent on Mark's narrative. That means that only the Markian narrative can be used in citing these "facts." According to these same apologists, St. Mark's account of the trial and condemnation of Jesus (☩) before the Sanhedrin (Mark, 14:53–65) is in any case secondary and has been composed either by St. Mark himself or by a predecessor. They say this because the Sanhedrin trial corresponds item by item to the hearing before Pilate (Mark, 15:1–5). Jesus (☩) thus appears before the Sanhedrin and appears before Pilate.<sup>598</sup>

The New Testament gospels depict Pilate as a perceptive man who sees through the Jewish authorities and recognizes Jesus' (☩) innocence. What is the historical probability of such a verdict? The available sources relating to Pilate show quite a different picture from that sketched in the New Testament. Here are two, though more could easily be added,

1. The Jewish philosopher Philo, a contemporary of the Apostle Paul, reports that under Pilate there were "corruption, acts of violence, robberies, maltreatments, insults, continual executions without trial, endless and intolerable cruelties;"

2. Josephus relates that Pilate misused the temple treasure in Jerusalem to build an aqueduct into the city, “The crowd was very indignant about this, and when Pilate came to Jerusalem, they thronged before his tribunal and made a clamor about it. Now since he had been apprised beforehand of this disturbance, Pilate mixed his own soldiers, wearing their armor, in among the crowd, but ordered them to conceal themselves in ordinary dress, and not to use their swords, but to beat with clubs those who cried out. He then gave the signal from his tribunal: the Jews were so badly beaten that many of them perished from the blows they received and many others were trodden to death as their fellow-countrymen fled. Terrified by the fate of those who had been killed, the people fell silent.”<sup>599</sup>

In keeping with the picture of a cruel Roman official, St. Luke presupposes that Pilate had a number of Galileans killed when they were presenting their offerings in the Jerusalem temple (Luke, 13:1). Based on these accounts, the implication of the New Testament gospels that Pilate was a perceptive ruler may be a great misrepresentation.<sup>600</sup> Their view that Pilate had merely been a pliable tool in the hands of contemptuous Jews, who were the real force “crusading” for the death sentence, is evidence of the historical and contemporary blinders that obfuscate the relationship between Jewish authority and secular authority (Roman then, American now).

In commenting on verse 27:25 in the Gospel of Matthew, and the consequences it bore for the Jews in general, the learned church father Origen wrote, “Therefore they not only became guilty of the blood of the prophets, but also filled up the measure of their fathers and became guilty of the blood of Christ...”<sup>601</sup> Thus the blood of Jesus (ﷺ) came not only upon those who lived formerly but also upon all subsequent generations of Jews until the Last Day.

These words highlight to some extent the typical Christian view of the Jews, as this has developed in an intellectual tradition extending over centuries, as it has acquired theological substantiations as part of this tradition, and as it has been predominant from earliest Christianity to modern times. Today historians have

explained that the way in which the Jews are incriminated by the New Testament gospels is historically problematic. As is generally recognized by these scholars, this results from their apologetic tendency, which seeks to exonerate the Romans and present the Jews as enemies.

It is obvious from the above that the Qur'anic elocution is accurate in describing the disputations and uncertainties between the Christians and Jews when it comes to Jesus (ﷺ). But elders in the official Christian church cast aside this mental confusion and assert that the crucifixion is "an assured fact." They cannot say who exactly put Jesus (ﷺ) to death, who was the legal party involved in condemning him to death, and whether it was political Roman authority or religious Jewish authority that bears the shame of this historical event. When all the available information can say nothing affirmative, positive, and conclusive about this whole affair, how is it possible for the official Christian clergy, most of which has its origins in Europe, the heir of Rome, to say that the Romans put Jesus (ﷺ) to death, that there were Roman legal proceedings, and that Jesus (ﷺ) was condemned for a political crime!?

This mental journey into the confused statements and acrimonious reconstruction by Christians and Jews of what really happened to Jesus (ﷺ) calls upon people of reason and faith to take an open-minded look at these therapeutic words from on high,

**...and for their [scriptural people] refusal to acknowledge the truth; and their awesome calumny that they utter against Mary; and their boast, "Behold, we have slain the Christ Jesus, son of Mary, [who claimed to be] an apostle of Allah!" However, they did not slay him, and neither did they crucify him, but it only seemed to them [as if it had been] so; and, certainly, those who hold conflicting views thereon are in fact confused, having no [real] knowledge thereof, and following mere speculation. For, of a certainty, they did not slay him [Jesus] — rather, Allah raised him unto Himself, and Allah is indeed exalted, wise (4:156–158).**

If the Jews and Christians could only look at these meanings with light in their minds and sincerity in their hearts, they would spare themselves the tortured and maligned history that has divided them so bitterly for so long.

### The Yahūdī Norm Is Aggression and Ill Will toward God

So, then, for the intransigence committed by those who followed the Jewish faith did We deny them certain of the good things of life, which [in times past] had been allowed to them; and [We did this] for their having so often turned away from the path of Allah; and [for] their taking usury although it had been forbidden to them; and their wrongful devouring of other people's wealth. And for those from among them who [continue to] deny the truth [of Allah's power presence in human life] We have prepared a painful suffering (4:160–161).

The *sūrah* here, in addition to the transgression and hostilities displayed toward prophets, and 'Īsá (ﷺ) in particular, mentions other egregious characteristics of the Yahūd. It cites their infractions, transgressions, and the way they deter and detract from a human course to Allah (ﷻ) — *wa-bi-ṣaddihim 'an sabil allāh*. Reading these *āyāt* while observing these types of human beings leaves the impression that this disincentive toward Allah (ﷻ) has become the Yahūd's second nature. As bad as all this obviously is, there is more that is worse: Allah (ﷻ) informs that these deviants at the instinctual level have, give, and receive usury. They do this not as a matter of ignorance; rather they do it after having understood beyond any shadow of doubt that Allah (ﷻ) has banned, barred, and berated usury. It appears that the more Allah (ﷻ) speaks out against usury, the more these Yahūd indulge in it. The more it is morally undesirable, the more it is commercially justifiable. The mentality of this class of people has no problems or qualms with raking in other peo-

ple's money in illegitimate, unsuitable, unscrupulous, and opportunistic ways. To this end they will use usury and all types of financial schemes to concentrate wealth and to pile profits off the backs of toiling people, petty merchants, and the unsuspecting public.

It is this type of Yahūdī mental attitude that has placed them on a very restrictive roster when it comes to what otherwise would be accessible and legal of life's bounties and prerogatives. Had they been operating within normal human nature and the natural bonds of humanity they would not have been burdened with extra-judicial and extra-restrictive orders,

**So, then, for the intransigence committed by those who followed the Jewish faith did We deny them certain of the good things of life, which [in times past] had been allowed to them... and for those of them who still want to break out of the consequences of their own behavior and deny Allah altogether, for them Allah has prepared a painful physical and psychological damage (4:160–161).**

These *āyāt* are profound in the way they help us understand the lopsided and knotted nature of the Yahūd and their history. It is only this Semitic Qur'an that expresses the hypocrisy of the Yahūdī anti-Semitism industry. If there ever was a legacy of "Semitism" it is represented by the prophets and particularly by Allah's last Prophet (ﷺ). And if ever there was opposition, intransigence, aggression, and assaults against this Semitic heritage it certainly comes from these Yahūd. They showed disrespect and even contempt toward prophets, leaders, and saviors who were sent to them. How this Yahūdī class of people could have been so crude and offensive in their dealings with Prophets and Messengers (ﷺ) from Allah (ﷻ), and still rise to the level of prominence and respect they enjoy today boggles the mind. It could only take a Yahūdī character, or that which is indoctrinated into the psychology of the Yahūd, to express foul language and abusive words toward seers and saints. To add injury to insult, these Yahūd come out saying with



pride that they killed 'Īsá (ﷺ) — and they are arrogant enough to take credit for that! If this is the history of this class of prophet-killers, and if this is an attitude that has not been repudiated by them so far, we can only be on guard against the type of potential danger they may represent inside an Islamic society and state — in Madinah then, and wherever we may reconstitute our Islamic state and society today.

These are people who spin conspiracies and manufacture plots as a matter of inherent aptitude fueled by thousands of years of experience. This ought to be common knowledge for Muslims who learn and adapt to this Qur'an. The flaming fact emblazoned on our intellect as we understand these *āyāt* is that the Yahūd, as a class of people acting in concert, stand out for their abstruse nature, their zigzagging ways, and their stubborn antagonism and interference with Allah's (ﷻ) will and power within the human condition — that is, the expression of man's free will and freedom of choice. They will by their basic nature act in opposition to and react against the expression of Allah's (ﷻ) power in social issues whether it is expressed by gentiles or by members of their own clan. From the holy words of this sacred Writ, they pop out as enemies of the truth that pertains to Allah (ﷻ) and enemies of all persons who are the walking and working the will of God on earth. There may be possible exceptions as it relates to individuals here and there, and from time to time; and there may be periods of quiescence and dormancy in their historical pattern, but the norm has always been this ill will and aggression toward Allah (ﷻ) and His devotees. With this feature they have no permanent enemies and no permanent friends — but they do have this permanent irreconcilability with Allah (ﷻ). The only way they come to acknowledge, in practice more than in their words and beliefs, the truth of Allah's (ﷻ) power in human relationships and social advancement is by acquiescing to its popular power in the way it is expressed by an Islamic leadership with an Islamic civic order that meets the standards of this Qur'an and the Prophet (ﷺ).

Remember, this description of the Yahūd is not peculiar to those who lived in Arabia hundreds or thousands of years ago. This

description applies to the Yahūd as long as there are Muslims who aspire to be functional personifications of the Qur'an. When Muslims go looking for a criterion by which to manage their interaction with the Yahūd, they can only find it here in this Qur'an, which has the final word on this matter and all other matters within its scope. When any Muslim of integrity and principle wants advice on the Yahūd, he cannot go to the United Nations, the United States, or any other false representation of power; he can only look for it here in this history-perfect Book. And to reiterate, it is the Qur'an that has the final word on who this class of people is.

When we Muslims went looking for a description and definition of the Yahūd outside of the Qur'an, we wound up being enslaved by the Yahūd and their imperial confederates — literally, not figuratively. Muslim numbers are approaching two billion and exponentially growing while the Jews are no more than 20 million and frantically shrinking; yet who is in control? This is what happens when the Qur'an is no longer the determining factor. How long will Muslims continue to sleep through their Qur'an? Nowadays, Zionism is the spinal column of this Yahūdī menace. With the few Jewish individuals who have become Muslims from generation to generation, is it Qur'anically sensible for oblivious Muslim leaders to regard these few, who are like fingernails clipped off the larger Yahūdī body, as representative of an accepting and suddenly inclusive Yahūdī psychology, all the while losing sight of the Zionist backbone? But this is what can be expected from Muslim officials who exclude the Qur'an from their thoughts and omit it from their conscience? Until the moment of truth and its acquisition arrive, it will be the fate of Muslims enslaved by their Qur'an-ignoring governments to be pounded by the Yahūd and its worldwide financial system.

The punctilious and rigorous words of the Qur'an do not leave this Yahūdī phenomenon without stating the truth about the sincere minority within it. These committed souls are honored with words of acknowledgment and compliments for their true character of faith. They cannot be excluded from the historical narrative of devotion and the belief in Allah's (ﷻ) control and command of human destiny. In point of fact, they do not belong to the racism of

their co-religionists even though they are located there as a matter of historical and religious tradition. They, by virtue of their adherence to pre-Qur'anic scripture, thereby free of the racial and biased considerations endemic to their Yahūdī social ego, come to know and acknowledge the Qur'anic scripture when they hear it,

**But for those from among them [the Jews] who are deeply rooted in knowledge, and the faithful who are committed to that which has been bestowed upon you [Muhammad] from on high as well as that which was bestowed from on high before you, and those who are [especially keen on] standardized *ṣalāh*, and [institutionalized] *zakāh*, and all who are committed to Allah and the Last Day — these it is to whom We shall grant a mighty final payment (4:162).**

As it turns out, the Yahūd have had a commanding position in the travesty that is the corruption of scripture. Yet there have been exceptions: there were some Jews who saw the light and responded favorably to Allah (ﷻ), Muhammad (ﷺ), and the Qur'anic content. This enduring fact should make Muslims very sensitive about how the *‘aṣabī* reality of the Yahūd may and can produce those who move away from racism to the all-around, all-embracing, and all-inclusive Islam. These true Jews blend in with true Muslims, undistinguishable and comparable, “...those who are [particularly keen on] standardized *ṣalāh*, and [institutionalized] *zakāh*, and all who are committed to Allah and the Last Day...”

So what really counts is an impartial relationship with knowledge itself. This type of knowledge, undistorted by personal or racial bias, stirs and energizes the confidence in and obligations to Allah (ﷻ). In this kind of historical interaction with Allah (ﷻ) the relationship is consistent, indivisible, and inclusive. There is no room or tolerance for ethnic incompatibility, racial purity, or national supremacy. This human understanding and effort represents the consolidation of *dīn* beyond the false concepts of religious discrimination and racial sequestration.

Superficial knowledge corresponds to rock-ribbed *kufr*. There are people who “choose and cherry-pick” knowledge. They interject their personal selves and interests into the field of objectivity and the arena of investigation and discovery, coming back to reality with bigotry and bias. These, instead of allowing “science” to propel them forward, learn of some scientific facts that act as trip wires. After acquiring such surface knowledge they model themselves as scientists and researchers. Their scientific advances no longer generate more questions. They wind up reaching a scientific dead end. They claim they know it all and then follow that up with the announcement that God does not exist; or that if He does exist, He is irrelevant. This physical or theological knowledge that ends up denying God altogether, or that winds into monopolizing God for itself and its race is another way of breaking the continuity of God in history, the uniformity of His scripture to man, and the cohesive struggle of Prophets (ﷺ) and peoples throughout history.

On the flip side, though, there are many counter-examples in the real world around us. Those who have profound scientific knowledge nurture an attitude of universal evidence and probabilities that drives them to refer to a higher agency of knowledge. They realize that humans in their pursuit and acquisition of knowledge gain a sense of a larger order at work; the more humanly acquired knowledge, the more humanly acquired questions, the more the necessity to reference ultimate knowledge and ultimate answers. Following through on this, the utmost intellectual endeavor finds an answer of sorts in realizing that there has to be a human consciousness and confidence in one overriding fact: this universe in its macro and micro correspondence has an authority and deity free of contradiction, divisiveness, and multiples. He is in time, at length, and finally in command, coordination, and control of life and reality. He is the sole determinant who arrays and coordinates existence in its living and nonliving expressions. This larger schema is induced by profound scientific thinking.

### All Prophets Were Sent with the Same Message

The Qur'an is unrelenting in its exposé of the People of the Book, especially the Yahūd in this particular context. They are defined by their position and stand vis-à-vis the Qur'an and Muhammad (ﷺ). When they have the shameless audacity to deny that it was Allah (ﷻ) who sent Muhammad (ﷺ) as a prophet and messenger, when they have the chutzpah to discriminate among Allah's Prophets (ﷺ), and when they insisted on requiring Muhammad (ﷺ) to produce for them verification of his prophethood in the form of a script sent down from heaven for their satisfaction, it is at this time the words of truth are spoken and they are told that scripture is not something new — rather, that it is the standard in the history of Prophets (ﷺ). It is a social law that has accompanied human history, from the generation and society of Noah to the generation and society of Muhammad (ﷺ). Allah's (ﷻ) compassion and concern for man and his societies brought him this written word and studied scripture. Some people have difficulty understanding that all these scriptures conveyed one central message for one purpose. Any deviation from this fact amounts to “scriptural monkey-business.” And if some people decide, as a matter of practicing their free will, to subvert this fact, they will do so while Allah (ﷻ) keeps an eye on their decisions and records their demeanor. This much can be ascertained from the *āyah*,

Behold, We have imparted scripture to you [O Muhammad] just as We did to Noah and all the prophets after him — as We imparted revelation to Abraham, and Ismā'īl, and Isaac, and Jacob, and their descendants, including Jesus and Job, and Jonah, and Aaron, and Solomon; and as We granted to David a book of divine wisdom; and as [We inspired other] apostles whom We have mentioned to you before this, as well as apostles whom We have not mentioned to you; and as Allah spoke His word to Moses: [We sent all these] apostles as heralds of glad tidings and as

**warners, so that men might have no excuse before Allah after [the coming of] these apostles: and Allah is indeed exalted, wise (4:163–165).**

This is the fact of history that matters, and this is the movement of society that counts. There are theories about history having to do with the evolution of man from a prehistoric *Homo sapiens neanderthal* to the polished, shaven, and three-piece-suit man of today. Appended to this, a version of history casts human societies in a class conflict mode between the rich and the poor. And beside these, anthropological assessments of history suggest a “progression” from ancient primitives who were religious because they feared nature and the unknown to those who are liberated and modern because of the determinism of science. All these are intellectual leaps founded upon a logical construct of information, bits and pieces of which inform our collective memory. The problem with all these theories is their not taking notice of that vital and true component of history: the inspiration of men of God, the revelation to prophets, and the scriptures delivered to apostles (ﷺ). This one long march in the course of human history was one and the same. Messages and messengers came from God so as to have peoples and societies conform to Him and, thereby, be compatible with each other. In this historical crucible the truth is the master of events. Good news is the share of those who abide by it and bad news is the lot of those who contradict it. The heroic and hand-picked figures of this history are Noah, Abraham, Ismā‘īl, Isaac, Jacob, the kinship groups (*al-asbāt*), Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, Solomon, David, and Moses (ﷺ).

The Qur’an — Allah’s (ﷻ) words about which there is no doubt — states that Noah (ﷺ) was a prophet of revelation and scripture. He persisted in bringing God to his people and bringing his people to God, spending a lifetime of patience and tenacity in doing so, and trying his level best to bring about their spiritual rebirth and social revival. His society showed great resistance to him and his heavenly message: the more he approached them the more they reproached him. They felt secure in their wayward soci-

ety and showed contempt for Noah's (ﷺ) helpless and ineffective followers. As such, his people held to their ideas and practices of falsifying who God is.

The vast majority of Noah's (ﷺ) people were not convinced that he was God's prophet and apostle. How could he be? He was just a man, just one of them. Mockingly and unexpectedly, they finally told him to bring on the torment from God of which he was speaking about. Noah (ﷺ) complained to Allah (ﷻ) saying that these people were persistent in disobeying Him, and that they were more apt to listen to anyone with power and multiplying finances, despite the fact that these would lead to their ruin.

In response to Noah's (ﷺ) grievances about his people, Allah (ﷻ) informed him that those who have already committed themselves are the ones who will stay the course with him, whereas the others will not make the transition from *kufir* to *īmān*; and that he need not think any longer of winning over any more souls to Allah (ﷻ). This consolation came after many long years, scores of generations, and a lifetime of struggle and sacrifice. The social polarization between Noah (ﷺ) and his people came to a climax when the exasperated human element within him turned to Allah (ﷻ) and said, **“O my Sustainer! Do not leave a [single] *kāfir* to dwell on earth. If you do leave them they will mislead your subjects and they will only breed outright deniers [of Allah]” (71:26–27).**

In response, Allah (ﷻ) told Noah (ﷺ) to build a vessel that would become the means by which the faithful would escape the impending deluge. As he built this craft, his own people spared him no amount of degradation, insults, and derision. They were not in the slightest sense willing to reconsider their position concerning their aging prophet and the message he brought them for their own salvation. When the time arrived for the deluge to break out, Noah (ﷺ) was ordered to place a pair from each predominant species in the vessel, along with those who expressed their commitment to Allah (ﷻ), and his family members of faith, but not those relatives who opposed him — and this included his own son. The flood ultimately took place just as Noah (ﷺ) had warned, and as is the case with divine retribution, it took its enormous human toll. After that

the world was returned to a fresh start, from which deviation and corruption began to set in all over again.

Then came Abraham, David, Solomon, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, along with many other Prophets (ﷺ) who struggled and strived so that their societies would conform to the Will of Allah (ﷻ). This prophetic history is transnational, transcultural, transracial, and trans-ethnic. The people of every country and land were blessed with someone to show them the way forward, the way to well-being, and the way to Allah (ﷻ). This consistent and uniform struggle straddled all phases of human history. But despite this, human societies have had their own difficulties coming to terms with the pertinent facts from on high: we all come from Allah (ﷻ), we all belong to Him, and we will all be returning to His judgment and final abode. The team of Prophets (ﷺ) were tasked by Allah (ﷻ) to bring this message home and to gain the confidence of their people. These societies may have had varying sizes; some may have been as small as a city, others may have been as big as empires. The denouement of this impeccable history was the advent of Muhammad (ﷺ), who was sent to all people of all lands in all times.

All these prophets and messengers received communication from Allah (ﷻ). In this context Allah (ﷻ) relates that He spoke to Mūsá (ﷺ). But this should not be taken in a manner that raises the rank of one prophet in superiority over others, nor should it become an argument for placing one religion or race above all others. What is certain, as stated in the Qur'an, is that Allah (ﷻ) did indeed speak to Moses (ﷺ), that He expressed words to him. However, the details of how this happened are not known. How were these words vocalized? What was the sense by which Moses (ﷺ) tuned into Allah's (ﷻ) spoken word? About all this, no detailed information has been provided by the Almighty. Without being able to describe it with laboratory precision, what is beyond any doubt is that the conversation did take place. The Qur'an is the only book that can be relied upon for this information; all other narratives about this interchange are speculation and suppositions.

In this league of Allah's Prophets (ﷺ), there were some about whom information is given — that is, their names are mentioned



and there is a description of the people and societies they were sent to — but the majority of them remain anonymous. Nonetheless, despite the fact that even their names are not known, the important point here is that all of them consisted of spiritual and social revolutionaries who were all given a singular mission: to bring their people into conformity with Allah's (ﷻ) authority and divinity, and thereby establish social justice in the land with myriad blessings to follow, or to warn them of the dire consequences if they choose to reject Him. All of them were sent **“...as conveyors of good news or bad news, so that men might have no excuse before Allah after [the coming of] these apostles.”**

Man stands between the seduction of his lusts and the enlightenment of his mind. But man is simply incapable of standing alone; so Allah (ﷻ), as an expression of His kindness and compassion, sent these Prophets (ﷺ) and sages to furnish man with the knowledge he most certainly needs and the insight he would otherwise lack to lead him out of his temptations and into a better and more fruitful life, **“...and Allah is indeed glorified, wise.”**

### **Mind and Scripture Complement One Another**

This particular *āyah*, **“...so that people might not have a justification [for their worldly deviation] before Allah after [the advent of] these apostles...”** brings people to an encounter with their own selves. It lends itself to the understanding that man's own mind and intellect alone are insufficient for him to navigate his course through life. As precious and necessary as his mind and his thinking are, they are not, in and of themselves, capable of ascertaining the truth that is pertinent to Allah (ﷻ). Human beings cannot even figure out their own interest by relying only on their minds, especially insofar as these minds are not working within a framework of guidance offered by Allah (ﷻ). If man was left to find his way in life depending on a mind unconditioned by guidance from God, or on an intellect bereft of direction from Allah (ﷻ), he will stumble in this abortive process and fall short of reaching his objective.

A mind is indeed a cherished possession; without it man is reduced to belonging to the animal kingdom. But, with generations of experience and social and cultural development, humanity has come to realize that its collective mind is in desperate need of vital information for its social as well as its physical well-being. It is precisely due to this mental necessity that Allah (ﷻ) has proffered man the Qur'an and all other scriptures, as well as the Prophets (ﷺ) who presented them **"...so that people might not have an apology before Allah after [the coming of] these apostles..."** The human mind needs conceptual anchors; and all this vital information is provided by Prophets (ﷺ) and the scriptures they brought. It is this fundamental ingredient of the mind that dispels any excuse people may want to use for being misinformed or misguided. The mind is precious and pivotal in human life, but it cannot substitute for the good books and holy scriptures that came from the merciful Sustainer.

That being said, the mind is now required to dwell on the contents of scripture. One cannot claim to adopt scripture and then shut down his mind. The human capacity to reason is obliged to think with scripture as a premise, a filter, and a criterion, and then to move ahead in life while mentally interfacing with the *risālah* (Qur'anic communicative substance) as chaperone and mentor. The mission of prophets and messengers was to relay and correlate the meanings of scripture in the form of a social pattern (*sunnah*) that would demonstrate the value of these meanings in the architecture of human relationships. The social conscience of people has to bloom in the thriving meanings that are processed by the thinking minds of the recipient individuals. Thus, the Qur'an is no substitute for the human mind and the human mind is not a substitute for the Qur'an. Both work together, simultaneously and synergistically. In the entire history of scripture, there is no idea or intimation of anything such as "you must not think; you must simply believe." This is a gross misunderstanding of the nature of and relationship between the God-given human intellect and the God-revealed divine scripture. Both of them complement one other.

A connected flaw in this area occurs when certain presumptuous people employ the human mind to judge over the meanings of

the Qur'an. They would argue that the human mind coupled with centuries of human experience can validate or invalidate what is said in this Qur'an. Nonsense. How can a limited human mind "fully" understand the *āyāt* of the limitless Qur'an and then reach the conclusion that it deems certain *āyāt* acceptable and others unacceptable? The Qur'an is gifted to the human mind so that it can understand its meanings, their context, as well as their application. Once this is done in whatever inadequate fashion is possible for human beings, they still cannot leave it up to their intellectual discretion to decide whether they will accept such meanings or not.

A good bulk of this Qur'an is forthrightly directed to the human faculty of thinking and reasoning. The mind is expected to think logically and understand rationally the precious words that come from the Creator. But giving this task to the human ability to think does not render this thinking ability an evaluator or an arbiter of what Allah (ﷻ) is saying — *nastaghfirūhu wa-natūbū ilayhi* (we ask Him for forgiveness and we repent for saying such a thing).

The God-gifted human mind is expected to understand the meaning of the scriptural text, its substance and significance within the framework of language delivery and idiomatic usage. Once the mind does this it has served its purpose. And once the meaning gains its logic there can be no human mind or intellectual that can nullify an *āyah* of the Qur'an on a "rational" basis of judgment. The mind retrospectively has to concede that the Qur'an is Allah's (ﷻ) instruction in the same way that the mind itself is Allah's (ﷻ) construction. When the scriptural text itself comes from Allah (ﷻ), the mind, which also comes from Allah (ﷻ), cannot be judgmental over what Allah (ﷻ) has to say.

Those who feel they can pass judgment on the *āyāt* of the Qur'an, or more generally on guidance that comes from God, have a tendency to inflate or exaggerate the function of the mind. The issue here is that there is a "natural drive" to understand Allah (ﷻ) beyond the level of ignorance and illiteracy. And when this human mind cannot penetrate the God-given scripture because of linguistic difficulties, rational inconsistencies, or mental inadequacies it

tries its best to circumvent the problem by amplifying the role of the “mind,” which itself is the rational being’s mental component juxtaposed with his psyche. Within the procedures and routine of “thinking,” there are increments of logic, coherently organized such that there appears to be no contradiction of thought. The mind thus is equipped with something like a universal methodology for “reasoning;” at times, this process is elevated to what some may consider a governing principle in the universe.

This “self-sustaining logic” either has fervent mental contact with Allah (ﷻ), His Prophets (ﷺ) and scriptures in which case it is healthy, fruitful, and productive; or it does not have such mental contact whereby it becomes circuitous, aimless, or counterproductive. The first serious logical deviation or accommodation that demonstrates this polarity comes from within the Judeo-Christian value system. The ancient world had a great respect for tradition and precedent, especially in religion. The emergence of Christianity, particularly, caused a type of mental friction between the conclusions the human mind had already reached and the new considerations that did not fit well within the mainstream mental schema of that time. Christian thinkers tried to surmount this obstacle by contending that the Christian religion had deep roots in Israeli history as well as in the wisdom of Greek philosophers. Some of these Christian theologians argued that Christ is the Logos in whom every race of men shared.<sup>602</sup> Those who lived in accordance with the Logos — that is, true reason — are Christians, even though they may have been regarded as atheists, for example, Socrates and Heraclitus among the Greeks.<sup>603</sup>

Christian writers developed a theology of the Logos in order to justify their belief in divine creation and incarnation. The word *Logos*, translated as *Word* in the Gospel of John, also meant *reason*, *purpose*, and *wisdom* (John, 1:1–18). The term was used in Stoicism, Middle Platonism, and the writings of Philo to mean a cosmic principle of order and harmony, or the pattern or power by which God impinged upon the world.<sup>604</sup> Some in this Christian mental diaspora developed these two concepts and taught that the Logos was eternally with God, as His mind or wisdom.

The mind is a powerful instrument, and if it cannot find satisfactory meaning in its direct contact with unadulterated scripture, then it searches for this meaning on its own. The above is a sample of how this mind, left to its own logic, ran into the Logos gibber and jabber. In order to avoid being trapped in this kind of mental cul-de-sac, the eager human mind needs prophets and scriptures from God to give it the broad answers that are needed to guide human thoughts in the right direction and to shape human conduct according to the right pattern. Therefore, “...[We sent off all these] apostles as heralds of glad tidings and as warners, so that people might have no excuse presented to God after [the coming of] these apostles...”

Notwithstanding this reality, there are still “intellectuals” who practically want to deify the human mind. They try to drag their understanding of the Qur’an through philosophical and conceptual constructs of their own making; and if the Qur’an or an *āyah* in the Qur’an do not fit into that mental construct of theirs they prefer to suspend or dismiss what Allah (ﷻ) is saying. *Philosophy* or the love of wisdom is a mental exercise. It is the subject that deals with the most general questions about the universe and man’s place in it. The philosophical mind is stimulated to venture into areas where it wonders if the world is entirely physical in its composition and processes. Is there any purpose to it? Can we know anything for certain? Are we free? Are there any absolute values? And the mind can come up with numerous logical answers to these questions. Every set of logical answers has to be carefully crafted within the perimeters of logic.<sup>605</sup> Once this is done, then that set of questions and answers that are interconnected by a disciplined methodology of thinking can be characterized as a philosophy.

However, there is an indispensable source of information here, and that information comes from Allah (ﷻ). If our minds do not build their thinking methodology around this body of scriptural information, then we end up wandering into uncertain and speculative areas. In a nutshell, the desire to give this mental drift some sort of epistemological structure is what began with the philosophies of Greece and India and continued with more sophistication

and agnosticism in the philosophies of modern Europe and America. Philosophy differs from science, in that its questions cannot be answered empirically, by observation or experiment; and from secular religion, in that its purpose is entirely intellectual, and allows no role for revelation and scripture. Philosophy tends to proceed by an informal but rigorous process of conceptual analysis and reasoning. Its major branches include metaphysics, epistemology (or theory of knowledge), ethics, and logic (especially the theory of meaning, formal logic now being regarded more as a part of mathematics.) Philosophy, absent scripture, is thus not only concerned with the common core of human knowledge and experience but also with the concepts, modes of argument, and foundations of other special subjects, so that there are, for example, philosophies of science, history, art (aesthetics), politics, and even “religion.”

Western philosophy is conventionally divided into several overlapping periods or traditions:

1. **Greek and Roman** – from the 6th century BCE to the 6th century CE (the advent of Islam), with Plato and Aristotle setting the agenda for almost all that followed;<sup>606</sup>
2. **Medieval** – from St. Augustine in the 4th century to the 15th century CE, a period when Muslims, Jews, and Christians all tried to relate the classical inheritance of all three contexts, particularly from Aristotle, to their different religious traditions;<sup>607</sup>
3. **Renaissance** – the humanism from the 14th–16th centuries;
4. **Early Modern** – 16th and 17th centuries, when such figures as Descartes, Locke, and Leibniz began to work out the philosophical implications of the Scientific Revolution;<sup>608</sup>
5. **Enlightenment** – the consequent liberalism and empiricism of the 18th century; and
6. **Modern** – the 19th and 20th centuries, marked by the detachment from philosophy of more bona fide sciences, such as logic and psychology, and the professionalism of the subject around the core questions of epistemology, metaphysics, and the theory of meaning.

There are of course various points of contention and convergence with Western philosophy — especially where Islam, in particular, and Judaism and other religions, in general, are concerned — but on the same hand, there are other, more ancient, philosophical traditions, such as the Indian and the Chinese, that have taken altogether separate paths.

The human mind must be admired for moving ahead with inquiries, investigations, and research. But at the same time, this human mind has to be disciplined with the incontrovertible, truthful, and certain information that comes to it from Allah (ﷻ). Such discipline, however, is worthless unless this divine information is itself subject to the exercise of the same human mind. In this instance, the Muslims may have to face different interpretations of the same *āyah* or the same text; and this is all fine and valid as long as these interpretations are subject to the rational methodology of the *dīn*. Toward this end, no person, committee, or government has the right to interpose itself between the free exchange of disciplined thought that delves into the explanation or interpretation of the meanings of this divine Writ. If there are multiple meanings — not necessarily contradictory, but complementary — extracted from one text or discourse, this would indicate the fertility of the *āyah* or the *sūrah*. And this stands out as a feature of this Qur'an and how it resonates in the mind of man.

That Islam is rational can be comfortably asserted. It is the material of the human mind. It does not suppress human thought and it does not contradict human reasoning. The Qur'an in actual fact trains the mind and sorts out what is logically consistent and what is not within the larger picture and definitions of an errorless scripture. The Qur'an in reality relies on the human mind; its main concern is the human mind. This mind has to take a robust look at the totality of the Qur'an and then assimilate it into the mind's infrastructure for thinking and decision making. With that said, there is no allowance for a fragmentary look at this panoramic Qur'an, “...do you adhere to some of this Book and reject other parts?” (2:85).

When the mind endeavors to understand what Allah (ﷻ) is saying about the universe, life, humanity, the life to come, death,

human relations, social laws, the heavens, and many other physical and metaphysical things, it has to acquiesce to these meanings once it understands them, even if these understandings are incomplete, partial, or in progress. As a demonstration of what is meant here, let us exercise our thinking abilities and consider the following *āyāt*. Allah (ﷻ) says, **“Allah is He who created seven elevations [layers of outer space] and of the earth their equivalent...”** (65:12). This *āyah* can be placed in the midst of all the astronomical, geographical, and space information that man has thus far collected and studied. It can draw in conceptual models of what *seven elevations* or *space levels* are, but the fact remains as stated by Allah (ﷻ). The, as yet, undeveloped details of the full “scientific” meaning will remain in the making until the collective and experienced human mind reaches a moment in time when it may discover exactly what is meant here.

In another *āyah*, Allah (ﷻ) asks, **“Have not those who deny Allah realized that the celestial spheres and the earth were a compact mass that We split; and We induced out of water everything that lives...”** (21:30). In order for the human mind to determine the general meaning of this divine *āyah*, it can draw on the wealth of human experience, scientific investigations, and human observations. But after all this is done, the “logical pulse of the mind” realizes that there is still some more research and probing to be done to fill in the details that fit into the general mental schema developed by the *āyah*.

Proceeding further in this direction, Allah (ﷻ) lets us know, **“And Allah has created every animated being out of water...”** (24:45), which refers us to the process of creation. The exact details with all their mystery we may never get a mental grip on. But the accumulation of information, the spread of science, and the spirit of discovery will always serve to enrich the understanding that can be gained from these enigmatic, but nonetheless conclusive, words.

Yet a fourth *āyah* that solicits scientific inquiry and discovery gives us information about created beings we know very little about in an empirical sense, **“He [Allah] has created social beings**



[humans] out of goo resembling clay and He [Allah] created the jinn out of the fume of fire...” (55:14–15). We still have a long way to go to identify who the jinn are, and we still have to go a longer way in ascertaining their biological and biochemical composition. About our own biological and physiological makeup, we do have somewhat satisfactory information, which can still tolerate more scientific verification as our medical and biological studies advance. However, as to who the jinn are, we human beings really suffer from a science deficit in this area. To make us more aware of the universe we live in, this *āyah* gives us an idea about this abstruse subject; the peculiar details are left up to our human mind, its researches, and its explorations.

In the same vein, many other *āyāt* of this factual Qur’an lead to the inescapable conclusion that more mental work is necessary to dig out the needed details, so as to improve the overall human understanding of what Allah (ﷻ) has communicated. The universe, existence, living beings, and other things are objects that beg for our mental reflection and consideration. Whatever is mentioned in this Qur’an pertaining to them is the absolute truth, and whatever is not remains within the province of responsible thought. Whenever man’s mind determines a “scientific assumption” about a matter or thing and Allah (ﷻ) has already expressed the fact about it, it is Allah’s (ﷻ) words that are truth and man’s science remains an attempt at approximating that truth. Man’s mind is subject to trial and error; Allah’s (ﷻ) words are not.

Likewise, when Allah (ﷻ) says,

**And those who do not govern in accordance with what Allah has bestowed from on high, they are in denial of Allah (5:44);**

**O you who are securely committed [to Allah]! Be on guard against [the revenge of] Allah and abandon whatever vestiges of usury there remains [in your society] if you are truly committed to Him. And if you do not refrain [from usury] then be advised of a war [com-**

ing] from Allah and His apostle; and if you repent your capital is yours having done no injustice to others and having others do no injustice to you (2:278–279);

And settle down in your homes and do not be ostentatious about your allure as was done in previous ages of ignorance... (33:33);

He delivers an umbrella meaning that some may misconstrue as being imprecise. The overall framework, which is clear in all these *āyāt*, is binding on all thinking Muslim minds. There may be some concerns and specifics that the human mind (*ijtihād*) has to work out without violating the established meaning. In conclusion, therefore, the Qur'an stimulates the mind, stirs the intellect, and excites the mental faculty. In so doing, it reminds this fountainhead of ideas that Allah's (ﷻ) information is superior to any antithetical notions or tendencies the mind may have with regard to the post-scientific words of this effective and unfailing Qur'an.

### The Most Potent Social Force Is Affinity to the One God

More needs to be said about the value of prophethood in society, in history, and in the functional relationship between humanity and Allah (ﷻ). The same *āyah* lends itself to this added reflection and thought,

[We sent all these] apostles as heralds of glad tidings and as warners, so that men might have no excuse before Allah after [the coming of] these apostles — and Allah is indeed almighty, wise (4:165).

The second half of this *āyah*, "...so that men might have no excuse to present to Allah after [the coming of] these apostles..." is very significant in its meanings and very moving in its implications. The historical and everlasting role of these apostles presenting a continuum of social aggregates — be they villages, city-states, bona fide

societies, or civilizations — with the eternal and definitive divine criteria of what constitutes civil society lies at the very crux of human history. The avant garde of the committed Muslims, who honor and commit to this task by advancing the “Islamic” process further after the apostles themselves have passed away, are also in a delicate and elevated position of responsibility. These historical thrusts of truth confronting concentrated, authoritarian power, and justice-centered people taking issue with tyrants, oppressors, and their enablers are as much a sacrifice as they are part of a universal, transcendent mission.

The materialistic and contemporary “scientific” rendition of human history deliberately and sometimes vengefully omits this most central determiner of world events, past and present. Besides all the rhetorical hypotheses that attend empires and their super-power status, such as ideas configuring human history around propositions like class struggle or the free forces of the market, the most significant force that has shaped and continues to shape the composition and organization of societies, cultures, civilizations, and their governing bodies is either their affinity or aversion to the missions and missionaries of the One God throughout the annals of history. Within this spectrum, the more social structures and developed communities agree with and respond favorably to Allah (ﷻ), the more enduring and prosperous they are; and in a converse manner, the more these social orders and developed societies part with Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophets (ﷺ), beginning thereby to show hostility to and ultimately denial of Allah (ﷻ) and His emissaries, the sooner they begin to disintegrate and self-destruct. In a sense, it is the binding to Allah (ﷻ) in this world by heart and hand that generates worldly affluence, which in turn leads to post-worldly abundance. Parallel to this, it is the rejection of Allah (ﷻ) in this world by heart and hand that degenerates into worldly disorientation and eventually social ruin, which in turn leads to post-worldly malaise and anguish.

This is what gives the Messengers of Allah (ﷺ) the central role in the social affairs of man. This was not a “one shot” operation. The missions of messengers from Adam and Noah to Moses

and Jesus (ﷺ) may have been, in a sense, limited to their own societies, cultures, and peoples; but the cumulative momentum of this historical core activity and buildup over the centuries finally took on a cosmopolitan and universal drive with the mission of Muhammad (ﷺ) and the horizon of the Qur'an. All of these complementary prophets and apostles knew they were chosen for a historically and socially pivotal role. Their moral and ideological location was neither simple nor local. Even though their struggle at times may have seemed that way, their combined mission embedded in the Will of Allah (ﷻ) was to have repercussions that would be felt centuries and millennia after they had passed on, and will continue to be felt with the everlasting and ever-present impact of this Qur'an and the Muhammadi acquisition and realization of it. In the lasting and enduring sequence of scripture culminating with the Qur'an, this was expressed by Allah (ﷻ) to Muhammad (ﷺ) in the following words, **"Of a certainty, We will weigh down on you [with] an onerous locution" (73:5).**

Individuals who are destined to become the focal material of history are to prepare for their lifelong mission. The struggle that lies ahead of them has always been breathtaking and death-courting. It is in this light that Allah (ﷻ) moved Muhammad (ﷺ) into a position of alertness and readiness when He said,

**O you enwrapped one! Keep awake [in God-consciousness] at night, all but a small part of one-half thereof — or make it a little less than that, or add to it [at will]; and [during that time] recite the Qur'an calmly and distinctly, with your mind attuned to its meaning. Of a certainty, We will weigh down on you with an onerous locution... (73:1–5).**

This central task in history demands the energy of the central stirring in man, **"Verily, the hours of night impress the mind most strongly and speak with the clearest voice" (73:6).** The night is the time for psychological fortification and motivational invigoration, while the day is for operational achievements and practical

progress, “...whereas by day a long chain of doings is your portion” (73:7). The struggle is reciprocal and reinforcing, as night and day go together, with the objective being to drive the human will into its natural state of congruence with the divine will, “**But [whether by night or by day,] be conscious of your Sustainer’s name, and devote yourself to Him with unqualified devotion**” (73:8).

Unlike the behavior of today’s spiritual Muslims who want to polish their souls in the “seclusion” of prayer, not wanting to be sullied with the tarnish of the people or society they belong to, the improvement of self in this Qur’anic/Muhammadi model was always on par with and equivalent to the improvement of society. When Muhammad (ﷺ) was ordered to stay up during the night he was aware of his time-sensitive, society-changing, and trans-subjective role. The struggle against the deviations inside a person is the same as the struggle against the deviations inside this person’s society, spontaneously and simultaneously,

**Say, “Verily, no one could ever protect me from Allah, nor could I ever find a place to hide from Him, if I should fail to convey [to the world whatever illumination comes] from Allah and His messages” (72:22).**

The combination and the synchronization of self and society is still an issue that only a few outstanding and involved Muslims have been able to grasp. A paralyzing dichotomy of Muslims has on one hand the “Sufis,” who are consumed in a self without a society, while on the other the “*dā’īs*,” who are consumed in a society without a self. This discrepancy has left a field of mischief wide open for satanic forces to play off these two contradictory and often mutually exclusive positions. If only these two sides could see their own mutual need of each other and their combined need of Allah (ﷻ), the Muslim domain as we know it, and the larger world in general, would be considerably different,

**He [alone] knows that which is beyond the reach of a created being’s perception, and to none does He disclose**

anything of the mysteries of His own unfathomable knowledge, unless it be to an apostle whom He has been pleased to elect [therefor]: and then He sends forth [the forces of heaven] to watch over him in whatever lies open before him and in what is beyond his range of perception — so as to make manifest that it is indeed [but] their Sustainer’s messages that these [apostles] deliver; for it is He who encompasses [with His knowledge] all they have [to say], just as He takes count, one by one, of everything [that exists] (72:26–28).

Unlike the attitudes of today’s reformers, redeemers, and revolutionaries, who are looking for a “quick fix” with the objective of establishing an “Islamic” analog to Western civilization in terms of power and influence, the transformation of society is not achieved by a military coup d’état, nor by a social class of people coming to power, and certainly not by the trickle-down economic benefits that come from the freewheeling of a free market. The much needed transformation of society in today’s world comes from and with the transformation of man’s relationship with Allah (ﷻ). That relationship has to be adjusted, corrected, and perfected. This is the relationship that is at the core of human development and the one that amounts to the engine of human history.

Sometimes ordinary people get caught up in the heat of the moment, allowing themselves to be convinced by erroneous arguments made by “experts.” They tend to believe that empires and imperial power set the stage for humanity and are in control of events. Even as they are interacting with the Qur’an, they forget it is their well-disposed and gracious relationship with Allah (ﷻ) that raises their lives (the life of self as well as the life of society) and it is their impolite and ill-mannered relationship with Allah (ﷻ) that profanes their lives (the life of self as well as the life of society). Allah’s (ﷻ) communication to man is the crux; after that, it is man’s social and cumulative reaction to it that counts. With this understanding in mind, it becomes a matter of great urgency and a matter of life and death to make Allah’s (ﷻ) words and

meanings accessible to all human beings, all human societies, and all intelligent beings, the jinn included.

In times preceding the contemporary world, Allah's Prophets (ﷺ) spread the word and publicized the gospel. In so doing they did what was expected of them, they lived up to their duties, and they discharged their responsibilities. When they returned back to their Sustainer they did so knowing they gave it their all. As if this has not been underscored enough already, these prophets and apostles did not restrict their communication of Allah's (ﷻ) message to theories and hypotheticals; they, in addition to the words of truth they expressed, were busy trying to consolidate the truth in a social behavior that meets Allah's (ﷻ) standards and that secures His will in man's interactions, relationships, and social development. In other words, they wanted Allah's (ﷻ) message to be the norm, the standard, the model, and the pattern of human behavior and social conduct. Doing this became their signature jihad.

At first blush, this may sound easy — if it is all taken out of context. But in the context of the real world to which this message was repeatedly presented, it is well known that these prophets in transmitting thoughts and feelings, ideas and solutions, and rules and laws had to dispel negative images and deliberate misinformation produced and publicized by their opponents. These men of God were accused of insanity and blasphemy. Not only did they have to endure all this, they were required to fight back with the truth that comes with justice, and with justice that comes with the truth. There were establishments, systems, and governments that were, for national security reasons, for economic purposes, and for status quo expediencies at lethal odds with God's men of scripture — His Prophets and Messengers (ﷺ).

Then came Allah's (ﷻ) final prophet, Muhammad (ﷺ), who demonstrated to everyone that a deviant society — even a primitive one as existed in Arabia during his generation — will never countenance or tolerate a human attempt to dismantle its own social, economic, and military structure. If the difference between an Islamic theory or ideal and whatever happens to be opposing it is strictly abstract and intellectual, then why cannot the opponents

of Islam relinquish their grip on power and use their persuasive powers to rationalize their own theories? Why is it so hard for them to let the Islamic and non-Islamic theories clash in an open public forum where neither has a base of institutional power behind it and then let the best theory win? But that did not happen and it will never happen. The way counter-Muslims behave is that they will use any power at their disposal, usually illegitimate, to hold out and refuse the Islamic appeal to the average man and to the larger population. When that “ram it down your throat” approach becomes a “social law” it is not the Muslims’ choice to throw in the towel and make believe they can change society by words alone. If they learned anything from Allah’s final Prophet (ﷺ), it should be that it takes power to diffuse power, and that it takes the power of truth to diffuse the power of falsehood. In this manner, “...there will be no *fitnah*, and the *dīn* will be Allah’s” (8:39).

As described above, these prophets did not go on to their Maker until they finished their lifelong divine assignment with a clean conscience and a womb-to-tomb struggle of honor. After them it fell on their followers and disciples to carry the torch and continue the strenuous effort. And, in fact, there were many generations after these noble prophets who indeed fulfilled that role. Most importantly in the here and now, it is the duty of the followers of Muhammad (ﷺ), the avid Qur’anic avatars, to walk this walk. The historical crucible after Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Qur’anic revelation is for average human beings — you and me — to fill in the vacuum, stand for Allah (ﷻ), speak truth to power, and make it clear to friend and foe alike that the trust given by Allah (ﷻ) to man will be shouldered and muscled, understood and implemented by this *khaliḥah/man* on earth. This is the responsibility that beckons the faithful and high-fidelity Muslims. There is nothing in this Book of books that delays this urgent obligation until a savior arrives; there is nothing in this Book of reason that postpones this historical constant because man pleads ignorance. The words in this *āyah* are cerebral, “...so that people might have no self-justification vis-à-vis God after [the coming of] these apostles...”



The long and drawn-out 23 years of Muhammad's (ﷺ) prophethood were meant to give the average human being confidence in the face of those who concentrate power and project the idea that it is impossible to transition from a painful and oppressive state to a just social order. This energetic endeavor of Allah's final Prophet (ﷺ) serves as a how-to manual for the oppressed people of any time or any place, showing them how to discharge a human responsibility and deliver achievable results, all by the use of the human means available to them. As during his era, this may at times turn into a clash with the dominant power culture. However, if it was done once without the intervention of miracles, it can be done again. Whether it succeeds or not is determined by Allah (ﷻ).

We should not be obsessed with instant gratification for our efforts. If immediate results were the measure of success, we could say that almost all the prophets prior to Muhammad (ﷺ) were failures. But when we look at the larger picture and understand that what counts is the human effort and not the worldly result of that effort, we realize no prophet can be characterized as having failed in the achievement of his mission. The Scripture (the Qur'an) is still the Scripture. People are still people. In this mix there are traditions, confusion, distortions, and alienation. Not to be forgotten or to go unheeded is the fact that vested interests are represented by administrations, authorities, and regimes, which have been and continue to be the most serious barrier between God's words and God's world. Illegitimate governments are not innocent bystanders when committed Muslims are out in the social field radiating with revelation and socializing others with scripture. These political parliaments and parties have always objected to the free flow of scripture into their societies. And if need be, these governmental structures will use anything at their disposal to drive a wedge between God's mission and God's multitudes. Muslims today have to understand that this is also a "social law." Wishing this social law away is like wishing away a fox's normal behavior in a chicken coop.

If the world is void of Muslims who stand for this truth, who represent this fact, and who live up to this responsibility, then it opens up a venue for those people who are ignorant of Allah (ﷻ)

to present an excuse for their deviant lives and sinful societies on the Day of Accountability. If the Muslims themselves do not venture into this “prophetic territory” they may very well burden themselves with the consequences of a humanity that has gone astray. No Muslim can underestimate or downplay the enormous responsibility of being tasked with this obligation of “filling in” for the historical role of Prophets (ﷺ).

Leaders and “supreme guides” in the Islamic movement are called upon by the meaning of this *āyah* to re-evaluate their opinions and judgments as they try to find a comfortable way out of this exacting and profound duty. There are gestures and invitations in the “air” nowadays to induce “moderate” Muslims to join a democratic process by which there is a type of reconciliation between the Islamic movement and the structure of *kufr* and *shirk*. Some “Islamic” figureheads have been tempted to join this farce. The results, for instance, the debacle that took place with the first elected government of Egypt (2013), have been catastrophic for the Muslims and a windfall for their enemies.<sup>609</sup> We refer these Muslim leaders to this *āyah* and other *āyāt* in this living Qur’an, which may save them from the folly of their deviation.

### Today’s Trinity of *Kufr*: Secularism, Atheism, and Officialism

**However it be, Allah [Himself] bears witness to the truth of what He has bestowed from on high upon you; out of His own wisdom has He bestowed it from on high, with the angels bearing witness thereto — although none can bear witness as Allah does (4:166).**

In this *āyah* Allah (ﷻ) preempts the propensity of Muslims to be saddened by the fact that “Christians” and “Jews” seem to be paying scant attention to the facts revealed here in the Qur’an. A disturbing aspect within the psychology of some Muslims ever since the inception of Islam has been the inferiority complex it harbors vis-à-vis Christians and Jews. One indication of how pathetic this psy-

chological condition can become is that the Muslims want “Jews” and “Christians” to certify what Allah (ﷻ) has given them in the form of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Qur’an. Sometimes it appears that Muslims are more desirous of the approval of “others” than of the approval of Allah (ﷻ).

These Judeo-Christians can go on all kinds of philosophical tangents, they can concoct any number of mental schools of thought, and they may devise every type of dogmatic prognosis, yet has any of this mental exploration and investigation brought forth the level of certitude that comes from Allah’s (ﷻ) exacting words in the Qur’an? And at the more visceral level where the impact is felt by the man on the street, the practical result of their philosophical drift in a direction that ultimately ended up denying God altogether has been the social drift of their governments and establishments in a direction that subsumes ethics, morals, and the golden rule to the vested interests of a class of people accountable neither to God, and thereby nor to the people it rules. Any thinking Muslim should expect this simply because these Yahūd and Naṣārā have changed, lost, or mutilated the original scripture sent to them by Allah (ﷻ). Therefore, so what if these mental drifters, buried under layers of asphyxiating philosophies, do not or cannot see the light of scripture and the guidance of God,

**However it be, Allah [Himself] bears witness to the truth of what He has conferred from on high upon you [Muhammad]. Out of His own wisdom has He conferred it from heaven above, with the angels bearing witness thereto — although none can bear witness as Allah does (4:166).**

This testimony from Allah (ﷻ) suffices. The Muslims need the validation of neither the intractable Yahūd nor the distracting Naṣārā when Allah (ﷻ) tells them that He and His angels testify to the fact that it is He who disclosed the Qur’an and the truth therein. Who are “Jews” and “Christians” when Allah (ﷻ) is our witness? And when the angels are our witnesses?

This *āyah* does not operate in a vacuum. During the time of Allah's Prophet (ﷺ), poisonous ideas, inaccurate information, skewed opinions, hearsay, and the toxic mixture of truth and lies, which were meant to disgrace the Prophet (ﷺ) and discredit the Qur'an, were circulating in the Arabian society of Madinah. The heavy air of this relentless barrage may have been so suffocating that Muhammad (ﷺ) and his disciples could only breathe easier with some of these words of comfort and reassurance. The long discourse in this thoroughgoing Qur'an about the Yahūd and how they orchestrated an enormous public campaign to defame the reputation of Muhammad (ﷺ) and his mission must be kept in mind. These *āyāt* were revealed in Madinah at the height of Yahūdī social scheming and political plotting.

The words of the Qur'an press on with an accurate diagnosis of the reality on the ground in Arabia, around Muhammad (ﷺ) and the core of committed Muslims with him. The *āyah* declares an intention to inflict harm on those who are still in denial of Allah (ﷻ) and pose a serious threat to the freedom of this Islamic call of duty. Even after Allah (ﷻ) states He is a witness to the truth and validity of this Prophet (ﷺ) and the scripture he brought, these antagonists do not desist; hence,

**Behold, those who are bent on denying the truth and on turning others away from the path of Allah have indeed gone far astray. Behold, those who are bent on denying the truth [of Allah's power manifestation] and on transgression, Allah will indeed not forgive them, nor will He guide them onto any passageway except a passageway that leads to Hell, therein to abide beyond the count of time: and this is indeed easy for Allah [to do] (4:167–169).**

This is obviously a general statement operable and applicable to all who meet its description. There are evidently power blocs of people — then and now — who deny God, object to His power, and take exception with His presence in human affairs. Their elaborate pro-

grams deflect from God and “turn off” God at the psychological and mental core in self and in society. Some of these sophisticated structures have become a spent force of history. But one that is persistent is the Yahūd. They have, if nothing else, shown a consistency in their defiance of God, which exhibits itself in their belligerent attitude toward prophets, in their peculiar opposition to Muhammad (ﷺ), and now in their hostile disposition toward a growing transnational and multicultural Islamic movement of self-determination and self-rule.<sup>610</sup>

This *āyah* speaks about active *kufr*. There has always been power blocs of *kufr* that are stumbling blocks in the way of *īmān*. No involved Muslim with a shred of intelligence can stand up today and say there is enough “freedom and democracy” in the world to offer Muslims of substance the airwaves, satellite TV access, and an assortment of public programs that will make it possible for them to present and explain everything about the *dīn* of Islam. Civil hurdles, legal restrictions, “religious sensitivities,” and military forces act as virtual barriers to any public access for Muhammadi and Qur’anic Muslims.

Today’s Muslims are daydreaming, thinking the world is liberal enough to accept the Islamic program as it is presented here in this thoughtful Qur’an. To experience the layers of denial (*kufr*) to this divine and practical order of Islam, these types of people would have had to advance into the real world with the profound message of this Qur’an. Regardless of their contemporary disposition, the Muslims still are tasked with moving ahead with the meanings herein. And as they do so they should take notice of Allah’s (ﷻ) words as they tell them it is the *kāfirs* and the detractors who are on the wrong course in life, **“Behold, those who are actively in denial [of Allah’s power] and are in the process of forcing back [potential Muslims] it is they who are in deep deviation.”**

There are governmental structures, ministries of the interior, information ministries, ministries of “justice,” and ministries of “defense” that will not permit Muslims to express the social meanings of this Qur’an or their ideological nature. These ministries are not run by phantom personalities. The employees in them are not

ghosts. They are real people whose job description is to ensure that secularism as defined by a materialistic, Judeo-Christian West lives and Islam as understood at its source (the Qur'an and Sunnah) dies. These secular gatekeepers, even though they may sport cultural "Islamic" gewgaws, are to be evaluated not by their "cultural trinkets" but rather by their job descriptions. And their job descriptions are to serve in the *kāfir* establishment while rendering disservice to an ideological Qur'an and a practical prophet.

These employees of *kufr* demonstrate mental deviation, conceptual fogginess, and a depraved doctrine. They are to be held responsible for social disorder, behavioral disorderliness, and unstable circumstances — conditions that are to be expected when Allah (ﷻ) no longer is the authority on human affairs. Such conditions erupt when the Qur'an and Sunnah are "elevated" to the abstract, or when the Qur'an is considered absent the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ), or vice versa. A *kāfir* lifestyle and system in this world leads to *kāfir* consequences and systemic chastisement in the world to come. This *kufr* state of affairs is the dogged deviation and errant waywardness this *āyah* speaks about, **"...they are irretrievable in their departure [from Allah]."**

When the *āyah* continues it refers to the *kāfirs'* cumulative defective effort, **"In fact those who deny Allah [and His power in social affairs] and do injustice..."** First of all, it should be mentioned that *kufr* itself is injustice. When the human mind takes issue with the divinity and authority of Allah (ﷻ) it sets itself on a course that cannot secure justice in self and in society. Allah (ﷻ) is the truth; denying Him amounts to a denial of the truth. Allah (ﷻ) is fair to individuals; denying Him leads to being unfair to individuals. *Kufr*, in general, should be understood as the abstract, mental, and academic exclusion of Allah (ﷻ) from being man's authority on earth. The time should come, with more urgency today than ever before, when Islamic descriptive literature is cleansed of such words as *blasphemy*, *disbelief*, and their Judeo-Christian equivalents when referring to the word *kufr*. Blasphemy is understood in the Judeo-Christian culture as any word, sign, or action that intentionally insults the goodness of or is offensive to

God. Until the Enlightenment, it was punishable by death. Blasphemy was classified as heretical if it openly asserted something contrary to faith, and as non-heretical if it involved careless or insulting speech about God. In many Christian countries, it is technically a crime, and is extended to include the denial or ridicule of God, Christ, or the Bible; but the law is seldom, if ever, invoked. Blasphemy is also a crime in certain non-Christian countries.

In the Qur'an and the Sunnah, *kufṛ* has an *active* meaning. It is a reaction to the movement and success of committed Muslims. People, especially the vested interests of the rich and powerful, begin to deny Allah (ﷻ) when Muslims affirm Him. Therefore, in the absence of Muslims who are affirming Allah (ﷻ), the legal and social implications of people who are denying Him are absent. It can be said along these lines that before the advent of the Qur'an and Muhammad (ﷺ), the people in Arabia were not "technically" *kāfir*s because there was no Islam or *imān* to deny. In this context, the *āyah* in *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* can be appreciated all the more, **"...and those who do not rule with [the justice] revealed by Allah, they are *kāfir*s [in denial of Him]" (5:44).**

Transgression, oppression, and infraction of justice are the practical result when people, especially those deputized to make decisions on behalf of their constituencies, omit Allah's (ﷻ) authority out of their personal and public lives. This social and official behavior of *kufṛ* becomes a spiraling dynamic with destructive consequences. Anyone with an open mind can take a look at the world today and see how true this *āyah* is. Every society on earth that has expelled God out of its conscience and out of its community is paying a very heavy price for that deliberate decision. Sadly, what complicates matters even more is that some of these societies did not mean to expel God out of their lives; rather, they wanted to expel the misrepresentation and falsification of God as championed by "church," "synagogue," or even "mosque" officials, and wound up having to live a "godless" life replete with all the terrible consequences they have to endure as a result. From the richest country in the world to the poorest, and from Rome to Jerusalem to Makkah, no one has been able to escape this faux-religious dynamic.

For all practical purposes, God is no longer an authority in human affairs. The world is in a virtual bowing position at the altar of secularism, atheism, and officialism, all of which together have virtually become the trinity religion of the world. The high priests of this contemporary religion are the presidents, prime ministers, proxy kings, corporate executive officers, military generals, and “philanthropists.” All of them, including their ecclesiastical confederates who carry prayer beads, wear peculiar headdresses, and don religious robes, have one thing in common: God is not their authority, and by extension, He is not the authority of those they claim to lead. This has become the new religion of the masses with “Jewish,” “Christian,” and even “Islamic” flavors. This is the context in which the *āyah* should be read,

**Certainly, those who are bent on denying the truth [of Allah’s authority and power] and are bent on inequity and transgression, Allah will indeed not forgive them, nor will He guide them onto any passageway except the passageway that leads to Hell, therein to dwell for eternity... (4:168–169).**

There are simple mistakes in life; and Allah (ﷻ) makes it very clear He will forgive mistakes of an unintentional nature. But then there are the hard-core, structured, deliberate, and “we’re all in” mistakes that Allah (ﷻ) will not forgive. It is not within the justice attribute of Allah (ﷻ) to forgive the diehard deniers of His divinity and dominion. Such transgressors have thought out and worked out their clash with Allah (ﷻ). By doing so they have secured for themselves a “dead-end” avenue from Allah (ﷻ). These subversive seculars and mad materialists have paved their own way to the world of the dead — the abode of Satan and the forces of evil. They blocked their own selves from any road to redemption. They made it impossible to have their lives extricated from the dire consequences that await them. These are the sponsors of sacrilegious theories, the doorkeepers of a world without God’s self-assurance and dominance, the instigators of wars of national



interest, and the high priests of tyranny and tumult. Eternal damnation befits their high crimes, war crimes, and misdemeanors, **“...and this is indeed easy for Allah [to do].”**

This puts every dictator and tyrant on notice: as much power as they have, and in the event that God’s people will not be able to arrest that abuse of power from them, there will certainly come a Day when they will encounter Allah’s (ﷻ) power. On that Day these despots and megalomaniacs will not be able to call on any connections to get them out of the impending penalty of pain and turmoil. No power on earth will be able to prevent Allah (ﷻ) from exercising His power on these creatures who used to deny it. On that Day of Fairness there will be no magical formulas, no special treatment, and no favors.

Today’s seemingly powerful “Jews” and “Christians” are not going to be able to engage as their alibi “we are God’s children” or “we are God’s race” to bypass the justice of final accountability; **“... we will not be touched by the Fire except for a few days...” (2:80)** will not suffice. The broad banner of “God’s chosen people” may have worked for some time in this world, but it will not work on that grand Day of Answerability and Responsibility. This short sentient life is the time for all sincere people to realize they are subject to the power of Allah (ﷻ), which they, by the agency of those who are deputized by them to lead, have been eluding and evading on earth for years, even decades and centuries. That will all be part of an unalterable history on the Final Day. What counts now is man’s deeds. If he does good with Allah (ﷻ) as his superior Authority and ultimate Power, he will not lose but if he tries any other arrogant or tricky behavior, he will not be able to dodge the painful consequence, **“...and this is, of course, effortless for God to do.”**

As much as many Muslims would want to avoid saying so, but Islam is the historical endowment that stands for all scriptures and Prophets (ﷺ). Inheriting such a legacy places the doctrinal Muslims, not the traditional ones, in a position of looking with sympathy and compassion on lost societies, working diligently for their redemption, and sacrificing generously for a divine tomorrow. It is

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) who ushered in this final stage of human history, social development, and responsible leadership. He came to you and the “other” with the *ḥaqq* (a true and valid statement) from Allah (ﷻ) — the Sustainer of life, existence, and the universe. Man — with all the forces at work in narrowing the distances among societies, the benefit of his mind, and the wealth of scriptural guidance — has the choice to adhere to this authority from heaven above. However, in case he still chooses not to do so, he should know that Allah (ﷻ) is in no need of those who refuse Him and try their best to ignore Him. It is Allah’s (ﷻ) power that will carry the day — sooner, later, and at any other time. He is the elemental and the endmost power dwelling in our selves and inhabiting our existence. The heavens and the earth are His. His knowledge is overpowering and overtaking. Everything functions within the architecture of His will and wisdom,

**O mankind! The Apostle has now come to you with the truth from your Sustainer: in a firm manner, trust in Him for your own good! And if you controvert [Him and His power and authority], behold, unto Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth, and Allah is indeed all-knowing, wise! (4:170).**

This front-line position of Muslims carrying the scriptural mantle does not give them the license to be arrogant and self-aggrandizing, as they are now well aware through the eye-opening words of the Qur’an how the Jews and Christians, not being able to overcome their exceptional haughtiness and pride, adulterated their relationship with God and His Apostles (ﷺ). This scriptural history was recounted by the Most Merciful in order to make the covenant-bearing Muslims cautious enough to not fall into the same mistakes that consumed their Jewish and Christian predecessors. The religious fabrications coming out of the Judeo-Christian mindset have been selfish, outlandish, and offensive. Their history is replete with outrages that were given a Yahūdī and Naṣrānī scriptural spin. There has been a constant acrimonious relationship

between these religious eccentrics and the affection, accessibility, and receptivity of Allah (ﷻ).

The Yahūd demonstrate this fact better than any other people and their history. This correct Qur'an dwells at length on the rancorous history of Banū Isrā'īl; their waspishness, bitterness, resentment, and lack of confidence with Moses (ﷺ) as leader, prophet, and redeemer is a case in point. The diversion and digression of Banū Isrā'īl came not because of their ignorance, which can be understood to a certain extent, but from their knowledge of the truth and the facts. It is this human propensity to lose sight of the divine goal that made it necessary to dispatch prophet after prophet to human societies so as to rekindle that drive to Allah (ﷻ) and acknowledgment of His authority.

It is also because of the maturity of the human experience that this final phase of human history was deemed to be ready for this Qur'an and Muhammad (ﷺ) as the perfect and summational exemplification of how humans are to receive, interact with, and then act upon the divine prescripts, extending them from soul to society. In this regard, nothing other than the finality of Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Qur'an was possible as the culminating driver of all human history moving forward. He is the Prophet (ﷺ) of mankind: transnational, multiethnic, and post-racial. He belongs to humanity. Muhammad (ﷺ), the Qur'an, and Islam befit and are worthy of all humankind.

All other pervious divine narratives prior to Muhammad (ﷺ) have been doctored and scrambled. Not so with this Qur'an-Muhammad (ﷺ) combination: the unsealed Book and the unconcealed Prophet (ﷺ). They are both the "property" of humanity, **"...so that people would not have an excuse to present to Allah [for the lack of inspirational and revelational evidence]."** The combination of Muhammad (ﷺ) and this lifelike Book will remain the everlasting platform upon which to base allegiance on and trust in Allah (ﷻ). People who ignore this fact or who try to expunge it out of their conscience and the world around are defeating themselves and sinking below the surface wave of the future. Allah (ﷻ) did not withdraw Himself from humanity by restricting His avail-

ability to a race or an imperium. It is Allah's (ﷻ) justice to bring this final call in the Qur'an to all and sundry, **“But We have sent you [O Muhammad] as a mercy to all the worlds” (21:107).**

## The Holy and the “Un-Wholly” Trinity

As is the case in real life, the roles are switched from time to time between Jews and Christians when it comes to the truth that is represented by committed and conscientious Muslims. Here the ever-truthful Qur'an turns our attention to biblical Christians. Most of the previous lesson was preoccupied with the Yahūd. Both Christians and Jews in this context refer themselves to the Bible, and in a gesture of commonality, we all (Muslims included) share the fact that in our hearts we all come to and touch on scripture in whatever principle or belief we expound. This attachment to the Bible is what the Qur'an wants Christians and Jews to be conscious of.

In previous lessons and thematic clusters, a number of *āyāt* had exonerated Jesus and his immaculate mother Mary (ﷺ) from the fabrications, fables, and even fiction concerning the unique life of Jesus (ﷺ). As we saw, the Yahūd were the instigators and promoters of such distortions and prevarications. There have been numerous and unsubstantiated accounts about what is called the crucifixion of Jesus (ﷺ). The Qur'an — and the Qur'an is Allah's (ﷻ) final word on the issue — demonstrates the truth about this historical inaccuracy. Therefore, on this theological matter, there need not be this whole Yahūdī theater about Jesus (ﷺ) that, one would think, divides Jews and Christians — a division that eclipses the Qur'anic discourse on it. But the aura of the truth coming from the Qur'an is such that Jews and Christians find themselves in a common position of opposition to this Qur'an — Allah's (ﷻ) word of authority on this and other matters.

This lesson sets the record straight. It leaves no room for the endless theological argumentation that bedevils “Christian” sects and their religious subdivisions. This Qur'anic lesson says the truth

about Jesus (ﷺ) — who was not God Himself, who was not a god, and who was not the son of God. There may have been an influence of paganism that made its way into “Christianity” and took it in the wrong direction. The area around the Holy Land, especially north of it, was rife with mythologies and superstitions. All this may have worked its way into what was later to become official “Christianity” and the “Christian Church.” Greek and Roman mythology, Egyptian traditions, and Indian superstitions (which had worked their way into the area over centuries) converged in a way that impacted the pristine teachings of Jesus (ﷺ), thereby distorting his character, mission, and message.

It is this Qur’an that came to provide clarity. People who identify with or are affiliated with the Bible should rid themselves of prejudice and purge their egos so that they can listen with objective minds and clean hearts to what this Book of Allah (ﷻ) says about the whole matter. This Qur’an speaks the truth: it is Allah’s (ﷻ) word. It cannot be anything but the truth. It had to correct the Semitic deviation in Arabia as it polluted the message of Abraham (ﷺ). And here it is correcting the biblical deviation when it comes to Jesus (ﷺ). The Qur’an also corrects the human mind when it wants to “go it alone.” Aristotle, Plato, and other philosophers were as inaccurate as the errant followers of revelation when it comes to the relationship of man with God. There is a world of confusion, misunderstandings, and mental reactions, all of them off course and false because there is no certain source of information on matters pertaining to God, creation, and life — as is found in this exact Qur’an. And here, another gem of precious information, which comes from the All-Knowing, the Creator Himself, is given with regard to Jesus (ﷺ).

- (4:171) O People of the Bible! Do not overdraw [and stretch] your *dīn*; and do not say of Allah anything but the truth. The Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, was but Allah’s apostle — [the fulfilment of] His promise that He had conveyed to Mary — and a soul from Him. Therefore, commit yourselves to Allah and His apostles, and do not say, “[Allah is] a

يَأْهَلِ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا  
الْحَقَّ إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ  
أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلَا تَقُولُوا ثَلَاثَةٌ  
انْتَهُوا خَيْرًا لَكُمْ إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ سُبْحَانَهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ  
وَلَدٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿١٧١﴾  
لَنْ يَسْتَنْكِفَ الْمَسِيحُ أَنْ يَكُونَ عَبْدًا لِلَّهِ وَلَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ  
الْمُقَرَّبُونَ وَمَنْ يَسْتَنْكِفْ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَيَسْتَكْبِرْ فَسَيَحْشُرُهُمْ  
إِلَيْهِ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٧٢﴾ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَيُوَفِّيهِمْ  
أُجُورَهُمْ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْتَنْكَفُوا  
وَأَسْتَكْبَرُوا فَيَعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا وَلَا يَجِدُونَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ  
اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿١٧٣﴾ يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بُرْهَانٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ  
وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُورًا مُبِينًا ﴿١٧٤﴾ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ  
وَأَعْتَصَمُوا بِهِ فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ فِي رَحْمَةٍ مِنْهُ وَفَضْلٍ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَيْهِ  
صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا ﴿١٧٥﴾ يَسْتَفْتُونَكَ قُلِ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِي الْكَلَالَةِ  
إِنْ أَمْرٌ أَمْرًا هَلَكَ لَيْسَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَهُ أُخْتٌ فَلَهَا نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ وَهُوَ

يَرِيْهَا إِنْ لَّمْ يَكُنْ لَهَا وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَتَا أُثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُمَا الثُّلَاثَانِ مِمَّا تَرَكَ  
 وَإِنْ كَانُوا إِخْوَةً رِّجَالًا وَنِسَاءً فَلِلَّذَكَرِ مِثْلُ حِظِّ الْأُنثَيْنِ ۗ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ  
 لَكُمْ أَنْ تَضِلُّوا وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

- trinity.” Desist [from this assertion] for your own good. Allah is but One God; utterly remote is He, in His glory, from having a son; unto Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth; and none is as worthy of trust as Allah.
- (4:172) Never did the Messiah feel too proud to be Allah’s servant, nor do the angels who are near unto Him. And those who feel too proud to serve Him and glory in their arrogance [should know that on Judgment Day] He will gather them all unto Himself:
  - (4:173) Whereupon unto those who committed themselves [to Him] and did good deeds He will grant their just rewards, and give them yet more out of His bounty; whereas those who felt too proud and gloried in their arrogance He will chastise with grievous suffering, and they shall find none to protect them from Allah, and none to bring them support.
  - (4:174) O mankind! A manifestation of the truth has now come to you from your Sustainer, and We have sent down to you a clear light.
  - (4:175) And as for those who have committed themselves to Allah and hold fast unto Him, He will enfold them within His grace and bounty, and guide them unto Himself by a straight way.
  - (4:176) They will ask you to enlighten them. Say, “Allah enlightens you [thus] about the laws concerning [inheritance

from] those who leave no heir in the direct line: if a man dies childless and has a sister, she shall inherit one-half of what he has left, just as he shall inherit from her if she dies childless. But if there are two sisters, both [together] shall have two-thirds of what he has left; and if there are brothers and sisters, then the male shall have the equal of two females' share." Allah makes [all this] clear to you, lest you go astray; and Allah knows everything (al-Nisā':171–176).

These *āyāt* are a frank rebuttal to the notion of the trinity and all the body of stories associated with it, first and foremost among them being the claim that Jesus (ﷺ) is the son of God. This lesson illustrates in a straightforward manner that Allah (ﷻ) is one in essence, in self, and in being.

When these actual words came from heaven at the time of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), the church had settled on a doctrinal position known as the trinity, which permeated most of that era's Christian societies. This concept of the trinity may have had different semantic interpretations. The literal meaning of the word *trinity* is *threeness*; more specifically, it is a doctrinal term used to describe the Christian Godhead as three persons in one substance, or one substance in three persons — three in one and one in three. Some Christians would prefer the word *triunity* to the word *trinity*, since *triunity* emphasizes the unity as much as it does the trinity. But even to say this is to demonstrate where the difficulty and the irrationality of the doctrine lies. How does one reconcile the incongruity of unity and trinity? Thus there are an array of Christian theologians who have vacillated between an emphasis on the unity of God on the one hand, which leads into unitarianism and the virtual abandonment of the trinity; or else, on the other hand, an accentuation of the distinctness of the three persons, which moves them toward tritheism, a belief in three gods.

Perhaps the origin of the doctrine of the triune god was simply linguistic, and at one level, the formula may be regarded as the distinctively Christian name or designation of God. After all, *god* is not a specifically Christian word. Many gods have been worshiped



in the course of human history, and Christians found it necessary to say which god they honored. Christians see this early problem very clearly expressed in a passage written by St. Paul, where he says,

For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth — as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords” — yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist (1 Corinthians, 8:5–6).

This is one of the earliest attempts to specify the “Christian God” and to distinguish that God from the many “gods” and “lords” worshiped in the pagan world.

Two points may be noted about this early statement of St. Paul.<sup>611</sup> The first is the way in which Jesus Christ (ﷺ) is introduced. Christians came to believe that Jesus (ﷺ) had brought them a revelation of God, and so from then on, one could not in the imaginativeness of the church speak of God without reference to Christ and his “divine nature,” even if there was, as yet, no developed “Christology,” not to mention a doctrine of the trinity of God. The second point is that St. Paul mentions only the Father and the Son, without naming the Spirit. He distinguishes only two persons who are significant for understanding the object of Christian worship, so that this might seem to be an incipient “bi-trinity,” rather than a “full trinity.” It is indeed the case that the understanding of the Holy Spirit developed only later, so that in the early period one sometimes finds “bi-trinity-ism,” but this is not a considered doctrine, only a stage on the way to a full-fledged official church conceptualization of a trinity.<sup>612</sup>

The next level of mental commotion in the trinity domain is the so-called “economic” trinity, that is, the recognition of a three-fold action or function of God toward creatures. This reflects the Christian church interpretation of the experience of God in salvation history. Accordingly, God has been known as the Father, the God of Israel, who created heaven and earth and spoke to people through the prophets; God has also been known “in Jesus Christ the

son” through whom, Christians believed, God had spoken and acted in a new and decisive way; and finally, God has been known in the Holy Spirit, who, from the day of Pentecost onward, was guiding and inspiring the church (though, up to this point, no clear distinction was made between the Holy Spirit and the “risen Christ”).<sup>613</sup> But if God’s self-revelation as given in the Judeo-Christian experience is true, then must not one proceed from the economic trinity to what is called the “immanent” or “essential” trinity — the doctrine that not only has God been known in a “threefold” action but that God in God’s self is three in one and one in three?<sup>614</sup>

The doctrine of a triune God is not found explicitly in the church approved versions of the New Testament, but the wordings of the four officially recognized “gospels” lend themselves to an extrapolation that has lost the original theological substance of God’s oneness. In the four church endorsed gospels of the New Testament, chosen from among scores of others, there are accidental or incidental implications about two deities: father and son. Here it should be noted that the word *god* (*theos*) is almost invariably applied to the “Father” of trinity terminology — that is, to the God of Israel, or to the ultimate Source — though in a very few cases Jesus Christ is conjured as “God” (John, 1:1, 20:28; Hebrews, 1:8). However, the close association between greetings at the beginning and end of some of the Epistles is indicative of how these early Christians were thinking.<sup>615</sup> Even if this amounts to two-thirds of a trinity, the important point is that the theology has departed from the eternal oneness, wholeness, and unity of God, leaving the door open to a trinity conception. It is argued by some that in a few cases the full trinity formula appears,

The grace of the lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Corinthians, 13:14);

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew, 28:19).

However, these words are unlikely to come from Jesus (ﷺ) himself, and the earliest formula was probably baptism in the name of Jesus (ﷺ) alone.<sup>616</sup>

The development of the trinity doctrine from the now altered text of the New Testament proceeded hand in hand with the development of Christology, and to a large extent the two doctrines share the same terminology. A high Christology inevitably encouraged a differentiated understanding of Godhead. In the earliest period, Jesus (ﷺ) was often considered subordinate to God, but the tendency was more and more to declare him equal to God. At the Council of Nicaea (325CE), he was declared to be “of one substance” (*homoousious*) with the Father, in opposition to the Arians, who maintained a form of subordinationism. Meanwhile, St. Athanasius developed a theology of the Holy Spirit, so completing the Holy Trinity.<sup>617</sup>

In the Western church, theological thought began from the unity of the Godhead, conceived as one substance or being, and then differentiated into “persons.” Around 200CE, language about “substance” and “persons” began to appear. And when the emphasis on the substantial unity was pushed to extremes, the persons were reduced to mere temporary “modes” of the One God, or it might even have been maintained that it was the One God (the Father) who was incarnate and suffered in the Son.<sup>618</sup>

In the Eastern church, the theological bent began from the three persons, God (the Father), the Son (or Logos), and the Spirit. Here the principle of unity was God the Father, the origin of all. God is not derived from anything other than God’s self; God is *ingenerate* or *unbegotten*. The Son, on the other hand, is *begotten* of the Father. The Spirit also derives from the Father, but is said to “proceed,” a word used in the Gospel of John (John, 15:26). When pushed to extremes, this Eastern view could come close to a belief in three gods.<sup>619</sup>

The difference between the Western and Eastern church positions is said to be the different models or analogies used in West and East. In the West, St. Augustine illustrated the three-in-oneness of the deity from the threefold unity of the human mind, for example,

as memory, understanding, and will. In the East, St. Basil used the analogy of a society of three persons, Peter, James, and John. The continuing difference between East and West over the question of whether the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone or from the Father and the Son reflects this deeper theological palaver.<sup>620</sup>

For those who might find this unexpected, there are also non-Christian trinities. It is interesting to note that in many pagan religions, one finds views of God that have some analogy to the trinity. The mystical philosopher Plotinus (about 250CE) visualized a divine triad, consisting of the ineffable One, who is the Source of all; the mind or Logos; and the Psyche or World-Soul, which indwells the entire universe.<sup>621</sup> Although these three were hierarchically arranged, each being lower than the one above it, from which it “emanated” or proceeded, there is at least a remote resemblance to the Christian doctrine of the trinity. In Indian religion, the three gods, Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Shiva, often called the “destroyer” but performing many other functions, form together the Trimurti or “three power,” and each may be also represented as threefold in and of itself. The older theologians saw in such phenomena *vestigial trinitatis* (traces of the trinity), and believed that they go back to some primeval disclosure, vaguely remembered in all religions.<sup>622</sup> Few would take that view nowadays, but the fact that trinitarian views of God exist in pagan societies indicates that these deviations from the scriptural essence of the oneness of God had their impact on “Christian” theology.

The long and short of this church theology, which is very hard to reconcile with the God-given mind, is that when this Qur’an was revealed, the church held conceptual sway over many church following Christians who believed in what the church said is one God having three personas: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In this configuration the Messiah Jesus (ﷺ) was referred to as the “Son.” Hereafter, as to who exactly Jesus (ﷺ) was, church theology disintegrates into many opinions. Was he equally human and divine? Or was he only of a purely human nature? Or was he of one divine will projected in two natures? Was he eternal, like the Father? Or was he created? And on and on. This was not just some

simple theoretical, monastic, or academic exercise; it was a mental and ultimately martial disagreement associated with massacres, murders, and mayhem, costing individuals and societies their lives and existence.

In tracing the sequence of events from the time 'Īsá (ﷺ) left human society through the first few centuries thereafter, what today is called the “trinity” and the belief in Jesus being a God-son, as well as the deification of Mary (ﷺ) and her initiation into the trinity, were not a feature of the first years of Christianity. These dogmas or tenets were in the course of generations infused into a church doctrine as pagan officials and orders were absorbed into church suzerainty. The unfathomable reality by many Christians today — due more, at the leadership level, to an exceptionalist attitude than to ignorance of the historical evolution of the religion — is that early in the history of Christianity there was a creeping and then penetrating effect of pagan ideas into official church doctrine. The trinity concept itself may have snuck into church religious doctrine through the back door via ancient Egyptian religions that had observed a form of trinity.

This does not mean that monotheistic Christians did not exist. They did; and they resisted all manner of persecution that tried to coerce them to fall in line with the newly pagan influenced Christianity. Roman emperors, not unlike others of their ilk, found it politically correct and in their national interest to persecute and harass all Christians who stood for the original teachings of Christ Jesus (ﷺ).

The early followers of Jesus (ﷺ) were marked out by their clear convictions about doctrine and ethics. They recognized only One God, one eternal revelation, and one authority above all man-made laws and customs. Once a person became a follower of “the Way” a new lifestyle was demanded of him. This distinction of early Christian belief and behavior attracted many people. But it was also a cause of offense; enemies accused these early Christians of being aloof and of hating the present “world order.” Strong and influential (institutional) forces were acting against the spread of early Christianity. Paganism still maintained a strong grip on peo-

ple. The world was as morally and ideologically corrupt as it has ever been, and soon the popular movement of early Christians became a threat to the established political and economic order. Jesus (ﷺ) and many of his followers were wanted by the authorities of the time. Some of them became martyrs, others were persecuted, and yet others had to conceal their Christian identity.

Trinity today is as confusing as it has ever been. With the outburst of intellectual activity in the world, the trinity is still a notion that has no rational content to it. The rational mind in Europe parted company with the Church's trinity because the Church made no sense. Jesus (ﷺ), the Messiah, was "the son of Mary" and the church approved gospels, too, show him to be "the son of Mary"; but then the church overstretched and worked into the word *son* the myth and the legend of the trinity. "The son of Mary" became "the son of Joseph," with brothers and sisters; then doctrinal interpolation made Jesus (ﷺ) "the son of David"; and then a type of elementary hyperbole rendered "the son of Mary" as "the son of God." At different times Jesus (ﷺ) is variously referred to as "the son," "the Christ," and "the Lamb." With all this symbolism and symbolic representation, which have no doctrinal content, the church ushered in the central creed of Jesus (ﷺ) being the dogmatic "son of God."

### **The Trinity Folly and Its Obstinate Advocates**

Any serious scholar of monotheistic scriptural history cannot accept the divine title attributed by the church, as a matter of religious creed and conviction, to Jesus (ﷺ), whether it is as the "son of God" or as a divinity on par with God. It is this hodgepodge of mental inconsistencies that the Qur'an came to sort out. This is not a contest between "Muslims" and "Christians"; the Qur'an was not revealed so that the Muslims can score points against Christians who have it all wrong about Jesus (ﷺ). The simple, matter-of-fact issue is that the truth has to be made plain; and the truth is being said by Allah (ﷻ) concerning Jesus (ﷺ). What follows is this non-prejudiced truth,

O People of the Bible [the New Testament in particular]! Do not exaggerate your *dīn*; and do not say of Allah anything but the truth. The Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, was but Allah's apostle — [the fulfilment of] His promise that He had conveyed to Mary — and a soul from Him. Therefore, commit yourselves to Allah and His apostles, and do not say, “[God is] a trinity.” Desist [from this assertion] for your own good. Allah is but One God; utterly remote is He, in His glory, from having a son; to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth; and none is as worthy of trust as Allah (4:171).

There is a God-given mind and a God-given nature in man that refuses to place Allah (ﷻ) in a position of giving birth or procreating. This combination of Allah's (ﷻ) mental and natural endowment to man over the course of hundreds of years cannot but take issue with God as a physical father having begotten a human being as His divine son.

This human capacity to reason coupled with the knowledge of previous scripture put the emerging church into a challenging position with regard to the acceptability of its new dogma. Hence the onus on the church now was to give a twist to the “birth” of Jesus (ﷺ). Man's inner self and higher mind were telling him the church was stretching the facts; it was sheer incredulity for those experienced with scripture to have to believe that God had a begotten son. This was the doctrinal exaggeration the church could not inculcate into the normative God-given human intellect. Besides the confusing mental gymnastics and the bewildering theological contortions, not to mention the racial justifications, associated with demonstrating that one is three or that three is one, the fact of the matter remains: there was never a scriptural precedent for such a precept. It is simply insupportable, then and now.

Under the cumulative effect of a growing “mental culture” — the Protestant movement, the Enlightenment, and scientific/industrial progress — the church modified, or more precisely, customized

its interpretation of Christ's birth to say, in effect, that it was a birth of love between Father and Son. As to the "three in one" dogma, it would be understood as descriptions of one reality in three positions or arrangements pertaining to one essence. But varying descriptions of one essence cannot justify the fragmentation of that essence in multiple beings. After over two millenia, the mind is still resistant to church explanations of the trinity; and the tension continues to haunt those who want to belong to unreasonable beliefs and logical facts at the same time. When presented with this mental schizophrenia some of the impressionable advocates of church doctrine retort: don't think, just believe.

The established truth preserved in this untransmutable Qur'an is that Allah (ﷻ) has no derivatives, no extraction, no equal, and no offspring. Nothing and no one resembles Him. The fact that He is the Creator means He does not belong, in an existential way, to creation. There is a dynamic of differentiation between the Creator and created beings, between the Sovereign and subjects, **"Allah is but One God; utterly remote is He, in His glory, from having a son; unto Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth..."**

Jesus (ﷺ) was bookended by miracles, from his miraculous birth to his miraculous ascension to Allah (ﷻ). His whole life was interspersed with miracles; he did things that were unusual, supernatural, and astonishing. It is truly fantastic and providential for Jesus (ﷺ) to be born without a physical father. The suspension of this physical and biological law is within the capacity of Allah (ﷻ) as He has the power to will it and have it done. But this fact does not give certain theologians the go-ahead to make up a trinity. As the final covenant bearers who have no doubt in the irrefutable Qur'an, the Muslims are convinced of the "virgin birth" of Jesus (ﷺ), but by virtue of this same Qur'an, they shall never be convinced that he was a god or the son of God. The final word on Jesus (ﷺ) and his nature comes from Allah (ﷻ), the Creator, who says, **"The Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, was but Allah's apostle — [the fulfilment of] His promise that He had conveyed to Mary — and a soul from Him."**



The words of Allah (ﷻ) are clear and straightforward, “[Jesus] was but Allah’s messenger [or apostle].” This means that he was, as far as his nature was concerned, just like Allah’s (ﷻ) other Prophets and Messengers (ﷺ); he was like Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Muhammad (ﷺ). There were probably thousands upon thousands of God’s Messengers (ﷺ) throughout the ages and Jesus (ﷺ) belonged to them, was one of them, and he did not have any reason to deny this fact.

“[Jesus was the fulfilment of] His promise that He had conveyed to Mary...” This *āyah* should be mentally processed to approximately convey that Jesus (ﷺ) was born via a direct command from Allah (ﷻ) rather than through the normal impregnation resulting from a male and female intimate relationship. If it is Allah’s (ﷻ) will to create a human being without the sperm of a father, He, the Creator, may simply determine it and it will most certainly happen, “Whenever We will anything to be, We but say unto it Our word ‘Be’ — and it is” (16:40). We should remember that Allah (ﷻ) created everything from nothing: it, therefore, is not impossible for Him to create a human without the semen of a father. All people of scripture accept that the first human being was created without the intervention of both a father and a mother. Similarly, “[Jesus is the fulfilment of] His promise that He had conveyed to Mary — and a living soul from Him.” This is what *wa-rūḥun minhu* roughly means. At the beginning of creation the first human to be created received a living soul from Allah (ﷻ). Gradually that original human became a social being. In the words of this perfect Book,

Bear in mind when your Sustainer said to the angels,  
“Indeed, I am creating a human out of clay. When I  
bring him into balance and equilibrium and exhale of  
my *rūḥ* into him then prostrate yourselves to him...”  
(38:71–72).

This is parallel to the dynamics pertaining to Jesus’ (ﷺ) birth,

**And [remember] she [Mary] who guarded her chastity, whereupon We breathed into her of Our Spirit [rūh] and caused her, together with her son, to become a symbol [of Our grace] unto all people (21:91).**

Hence the creation of Jesus (ﷺ) has its precedent. The same lively essence of God that invoked life at the point of human genesis was active in the matter of Jesus' (ﷺ) conception. No religious biblical literature suggests that Adam (ﷺ) is also God because of his miraculous birth — more miraculous, in fact, than Jesus' (ﷺ) because Adam had no father and no mother. As is the case with Jesus, Adam (ﷺ) has not figured into the godhead. The fact of the matter is that people were not present when these supernatural births took place, but Allah (ﷻ), the Creator, was certainly there and aware of exactly what happened; so He lets people know, lest they fall into contradictions and meaninglessness,

**The illustration of Jesus' [birth] as far as Allah is concerned is like the illustration of Adam's: He created him out of dust; and then told him, "Be" — and he is... (3:59).**

This whole issue is not hard to understand. In fact it is rather plain and simple, if people choose to pay attention to Allah's (ﷻ) words here. However, when vested interests, governments, traditions, and pagan influence interfere, the entire affair is rendered into one of complexity and even stubborn resistance. Christians need not do battle with reason and shed Muslim blood about this crystal clear issue in which Muslims honor the birth and life of 'Īsá (ﷺ).

Muslims reading and understanding this Qur'an believe that Jesus (ﷺ), like the first human being, was created in a way unlike the way all others are born. This need not cause us to be enemies of one another; and it does not force Muslims into a mental nightmare about the nature of Jesus (ﷺ) — a nightmare that has taken its toll on religious and believing "Christians" themselves.

“Therefore, commit yourselves to Allah and His apostles, and do not say, ‘[God is] a trinity.’ Refrain [from this assertion] for your own good...” If only people could set aside their dogmatism and prejudice and look at what Allah (ﷻ) has to say about this fact, much human tension could be abated. Allah’s (ﷻ) relationship to man is one of benevolence and love. This relationship is expressed through the human mind. There is nothing in God’s love for His human subjects that presumes the indignity or the embarrassment of the God-given human mind, as is the case with the incoherent and unreasonable explanation of a “trinity.” Besides, if this trinity concept is a constant and faithful clarification of the Perpetual Being, then why did not the biblical prophets expound upon this “fact” about God prior to Jesus (ﷺ)?

After over 2,000 years of inaccurate and mistaken ideas pertaining to a trinity it is time for the human mind and the human conscience to revert to the eternal truth of God’s rational, consistent oneness and the fact that He — out of His coherent love for mankind — sent them prophets and scriptural leaders as guides. No other position can be acceptable to thinking human beings. God is one. His oneness is attested to by the uniformity of natural laws in the universe, the coherence of social laws throughout time, and the impossibility of rational laws in the natural and social spheres that emanate from a god who is “irrational.” When things are created, when life begins, and when history moves on, all of them together are done in a demythologized and lucid way. The distance between the creational word of God — *Be* — and its worldly expression — *Is* — does not tolerate an invalidation of the God-honored human mind and all the logic and reasoning that comes with it. This God-worthy human mind, in its God-given nature, cannot reconcile with a stilted notion of a Creator who becomes created, or with a Creator who breeds, or with a Creator who physically materializes, **“Utterly remote is He, in His glory, from having a child.”**

The issue is clear in this Qur’an. The issue though is not clear in the wording of what has become the church sanctioned “Gospel.” The latter is interjected with a church doctrine saying that God in some way is a “person.” Church language describes this

person as the “Father.” Once this encroachment of both language and concept began, the human mind worked against itself and interposed another “person” into the trinity and called it “the Holy Spirit.” Now, without any clear words from God that give cerebral substance to this claim, this “personification” of God was, by the official stamp of the church, worked up into a full-fledged trinity. In this official church explanation of the deity, the ingredients therein have their own distinct personality. The Father is distinct from the Son, the Son is distinct from the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is distinct from Father and Son, and each is distinct from the other. Where in God’s eternal words is this trans-scriptural “fact” stated as such? Where in the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Final Testament (the Qur’an) is this eternal “fact” about God stated? How dare some people levy an idea without scriptural reference and without rational basis, all the while claiming that they have a monopoly on knowing who God is? How can they say that each component of the trinity is one with God in essence but different in person?

The human mind, which has been insulted by unreasonable details pertaining to this trinity, adds to its own confusion when it “reasons,” with the reference point of church literature, that the three members of the trinity are distinct persons, and not one and the same person. The mind, if not working with accurate information, has the capacity to think in the wrong direction. When this human mind does not imbibe scriptural accuracy it feeds on imaginative incorrectness. Do some people listen to themselves when they say, on the one hand, that God is a person, and then on the other that God is a member (of the trinity). Where in God’s eternal scriptural word via biblical revelation does He say He is a person?

Within the context of the Abrahamic line of prophethood and revelation, it is well known that God’s word was a “Semitic” word in a “Semitic” language. The church, though, does not engage its mind with that direct relationship. It relies on a Greek language or a Roman language to process its tale of a trinity. The other Semitic Christians have long been either eliminated or eclipsed by establishmentarian church doctrine. The majority of the Semitic

Christians when listening to this Qur'an, without pride and prejudice, could only reconcile and agree wholeheartedly that this Qur'an authenticated and renewed their faith and understanding of God, Jesus (ﷺ), and scripture. And this explains why Islam out of Arabia was embraced by the memorable Christian population in and around the Holy Land, not because they were forced to do so by the sword, as some inimical versions of history would have it, but because they had a clear understanding of the human nature of Jesus (ﷺ), his role as God's prophet, and the continuity of scripture unburdened by the artificial thought of a human deity that is alien to the Semitic scriptures of the One God of Abraham (ﷻ).

At first the church's creative writings said that God is three persons in one person at the same time. But when that statement conflicted with God-given reason, it was refined, and the faithful were told there are three persons in one nature. This presupposes that the mind is capable, firstly, of reducing God to a person, and, secondly, of having an understanding of what "nature" would mean when applied to God. The church has buffered the indignant, but expected, backlash by saying that even though this may sound like a mystery, it is no longer a contradiction. Thus, the church and all who feel obliged to accept its theological view progressed from what used to be a contradictory trinity into what has become a mysterious trinity. With the same "elasticity" of thought, and without any pre-Gospel corroboration from the Torah or post-Gospel authentication from the Qur'an, the church found other words whose situational usage could be stretched. Hence, the church began to assert that Christians affirm there are three persons in one essence. Another way of saying this is that He is one "what" and three "whos."<sup>623</sup>

The human mind in the image of the church labors on to satisfy its own thirst for reasoning things through. Therefore, it proposes that the trinity is not like a chain with three links, for these are three separate and separable parts, whereas God is neither separated or separable. Neither is God like the same actor playing three different roles in a play, for God is simultaneously three persons, not one person playing three successive parts. Nor is God like

the three states of water — solid, liquid, and vapor — for normally water is not in all three of these phases at the same time, whereas God is always three persons at the same time.

Christianity is further consumed by this kind of “Churchology.” The more arguments it presents to the God-given human mind in an attempt to justify its theology, the more this mind appreciates these fine words in the Qur’an. An aspect of church logic in this regard goes as follows: since Christ is one Who (person) with two Whats (natures), whenever a question is asked about him, it must be answered in a sort of “logical” dualism, applying separately to each nature. For example,

- a. Did Christ get tired? As God, no; but, as man, yes.
- b. Did Christ get hungry? In his divine nature, no; but in his human nature, yes.
- c. Did Christ die? In his divine nature, he did not die; but in his human nature, he did die. The person who died was the God-man, but his God-ness did not die.
- d. Did Christ know everything? As God he did, since God is omniscient; but, as man, Jesus (ﷺ) said he did not know the time of his second coming (Matthew, 24:36), and as a child he did not know everything, since “...he increased in wisdom” (Luke, 2:52).
- e. Could Jesus (ﷺ) sin? As God, he could not have sinned; but, as man, he could have sinned — but he did not. God cannot sin: the Bible states that it is impossible for God to lie (Hebrews, 6:18; Titus, 1:2). Yet Jesus (ﷺ) was “...in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews, 4:15). That is to say, while he never sinned (2 Corinthians, 5:21; 1 Peter, 1:19; 1 John, 3:3–5), he could be tempted and therefore it was possible for him to sin. Otherwise, his temptation would have been a charade. Jesus (ﷺ) possessed the power of free choice, meaning that whatever moral choice he made, he could have done otherwise. This means that when he chose not to sin, which was always, he could have sinned — but did not — as man.

The God-given gift of thinking begins to suffer when there is no longer any reason, logic, or sense of truth around. This is the type of byzantine thought addressed by Allah (ﷻ) when He says, **“Abstain [from this assertion] for your own good. Allah is but One God; utterly remote is He, in His glory, from having a male human offspring...”**

However, the assertion that God has no son does not imply that He does not own everything in heaven and on earth. He certainly does. In having what He has, and for Him to be the overlord of universe and life, of heaven and earth, and of humans and things, He does not have to be incarnate or represented in a bodily form, **“Unto Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth...”** The proper relationship between man and God is a relationship of conformity to His overlordship, compliance with His sovereignty, and obedience to His authority — as He is the Manager of life and the Operator of existence. There is no need to contrive a human relationship with God that “constrains” Him to have a “begotten son” or to endorse a “chosen race.”

**“...And none is as worthy of trust as Allah.”** This is the forgotten or neglected dimension. We humans need to have a relationship of trust with Allah (ﷻ). We lack this confidence in Him because of temporal power centers on earth that have shattered this human-to-God working relationship. It is our fervent certainty in His word that binds to our mind, it is our strong attachment to His authority that defines our life, and it is our unquestioned confidence in His power that moves our generations. This is the crux of the matter, and not the theoretical boredom or the philosophical fine points that have been dividing humanity instead of uniting it, purveying poverty instead of curtailing it, and monopolizing “religion” instead of spreading it.

### Demonstrations of Fanaticism among Muslims

Many of us Muslims tend to look at *āyāt* referring to Banū Isrā'il and Ahl al-Kitāb as a sort of a quaint historical lesson. We try very hard to reject the possibility that we can exhibit the same tendencies, and thereby suffer the same fates. We think that it is rather easy to understand where “they” went wrong, and where “we” will not suffer the same pitfalls, especially insofar as we have the Qur'an and the Prophet (ﷺ). With this “us-versus-them” approach to measuring our joint performance as subjects of Allah (ﷻ), the Muslims have de-linked themselves from the history and continuum of scripture because they see the Jews and Christians as the “other,” failing to view them as reflections of what could happen to the Muslims. Looking at the people of previous scripture in this way, as a group whose characteristics, tendencies, and behaviors are exclusively and entirely their own, while maintaining an uncritical view of ourselves — meaning in a sense that Qur'anic criticism does not apply to Muslims — makes it all the more predictable that certain “Islamic” exclusivisms, in which potential members have to be endorsed and approved by existing members in order to join, have emerged throughout the previous 14 centuries. Indeed, these *āyāt* indict, if we remove any reference to people of previous scripture, the behavior of contemporary Muslims more than they describe the community of *al-ladhīna āmanū* nurtured by the Prophet (ﷺ) to go out and change the world.

This Qur'an and its model Prophet (ﷺ), as the final chapter of prophetic and scriptural history, came to discipline the destructive aspects of human nature so that its nobler elements could rise to the challenge of enabling man to discharge his responsibility of being Allah's (ﷻ) deputy (*khalīfah*) on earth. Man's human nature is not peculiarly Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, Muslim (in the exclusivist sense), or even secular; human nature lies at the root of man's being and thus whatever it exhibits in the form of tendencies and proclivities precedes the choices one makes about his religious, political, or ideological persuasion. The extent to which any of these persuasions (choices) can control or condition the tendencies of human nature, so as to enable man to fulfil his



prime responsibility, distinguishes one standard and approach to guidance from another.

One of the more damaging aspects of human nature is its propensity to drift into extremism, fanaticism, and zealotry, which happens to be the purpose of the *āyah* under discussion,

**O People of the Bible [the New Testament in particular]! Do not exaggerate [the contents of] your *dīn*; and do not say of Allah anything but the truth. The Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, was but Allah's apostle — [the fulfilment of] His promise that He had conveyed to Mary — and a soul from Him. Therefore, commit yourselves to Allah and His apostles, and do not say, "[God is] a trinity." Desist [from this assertion] for your own good. Allah is but One God; utterly remote is He, in His glory, from having a son; to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth; and none is as worthy of trust as Allah (4:171).**

The first part of the *āyah* could alternatively be rendered as, “Do not overextend [the meanings of] your *dīn*...” or “Do not overdo [the definitions of] your *dīn*...” The operative Qur’anic word in the *āyah* is *ghulūw*, which encompasses all of the following meanings: *exaggeration*, *fanaticism*, *extremism*, and *zealotry*. One demonstration of this *ghulūw* is the overzealous interpretation of aspects of a *dīn* of Allah (ﷻ) by certain people on earth. The previous sections have already elaborated on how the Christian segment of Ahl al-Kitāb went out on a tangent of *ghulūw*. Allah (ﷻ) has made it clear that, “**The Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, was but Allah's apostle — [the fulfilment of] His promise that He had conveyed to Mary — and a soul from Him.**” This was later developed in church-endorsed Christianity as Jesus (ﷺ) being the son of God, and it is this assertion that has come to be accompanied by scores of explanations of what “son of God” actually means.

So there are those from Ahl al-Kitāb — the Christians — who have raised a prophet to the status of divinity, but there are others

belonging to this same history — the Yahūd — who go into the opposite tangent of *ghulūw* by diminishing prophets to the extent that they can be accused of being liars and their murder justified, “Say [O Muhammad], ‘Then why did you [Israelis] kill Allah’s Prophets in times past if you are truly committed [to Allah]?’” (2:91). Any Muslim can see that all these explanations and experiences either extend Allah’s (ﷻ) revelation to the breaking point or break with scripture altogether. Hence, when informed Muslims look at this history and the *ghulūw* that settles into the dynamics of scripture as it pertains to Ahl al-Kitāb, they are expected to realize where and how a deviation took place.

But what about the “Muslim versions” of Ahl al-Kitāb: those who consider themselves to belong to Ahl al-Sunnah wa-al-Jamā‘ah and those who consider themselves to be the affiliates of Ahl al-Bayt? When we begin to look at ourselves and identify our own tendencies of *ghulūw*, this becomes problematic, something that is very hard for us to countenance, especially if the reminder (criticism) comes from a Muslim domain of thought and certitude that we consider to be counter to our own. In the way Muslims view their own history, there are some (Shī‘īs) who have interjected a concept of infallibility (an exceptional view of *‘iṣmah*) into their understanding of Allah’s (ﷻ) *dīn*. When these same Muslims look at what the Christians say about Jesus (ﷺ), they can easily discern that the Christians have gone into an unacceptable direction. And in the Islamic domain of reference, all Muslims understand that Allah’s Prophets (ﷺ) are *ma‘ṣūm* (impeccable).<sup>624</sup> However, to those who extend this into saying that the 12 Imams (of the Shī‘īs) are also *ma‘ṣūm*, the question then becomes: what do you mean by this?<sup>625</sup> Have these human beings become angelic? Is it that these human beings make no voluntary mistakes? Or, is it that they are *incapable* of committing sins? These questions and arguments come to the mind of those who are not privy to the information of what *‘iṣmah* means within a certain way of looking at our own common history. Just as the Christians have come up with myriad explanations to justify a position that is unsustainable by scripture, these Muslims are constrained to offer up an equal number of “clarifica-

tions” for their position. It is this type of behavior that harbors on what this *āyah* refers to as *ghulūw*.

On the other end of the Muslim spectrum, there are others belonging to the same Islamic history (Sunnīs) who place their own understanding of *‘iṣmah* in the context of the companions of Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ), known as the *Ṣaḥābah*. Unlike their Shī‘ī brothers, these Sunnīs do not come out and verbalize their position, but by the way they teach Islam, and by the way they go about making their dogmatic decisions, they conclude or infer that the *Ṣaḥābah* are *ma‘ṣūm*. And once again, these Muslims offer up close to a thousand explanations, all of which are based loosely on the Qur’an and the Sunnah, to rationalize a position that cannot be easily substantiated. Both of these groupings that make up the general Muslim mind (Sunnīs and Shī‘īs) drive an unaffiliated reader of the Qur’an toward the same observation: are these Muslims stretching the meanings of these *āyāt* too much; are these Muslims on the verge of *ghulūw*?

A consistent and conspicuous theme throughout the volumes of this *tafsīr* is that all human beings are subject to their human nature, and thus, they all exhibit a susceptibility to get sidetracked into fanaticism and extremism; the only thing that can effectively mediate this inclination is Allah’s (ﷻ) revealed word. Given that this is a feature of human nature, it had to have existed at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) so that this destructive propensity could be duly corrected and eliminated from the personality and progress of those who were commissioned to carry the divine message to the rest of humanity. One illustration of the mindset of some people who fell into *ghulūw* at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) is the following anecdote,

Three individuals came to the Prophet’s (ﷺ) wives’ homes asking about the Prophet’s (ﷺ) devotional character. When they listened to the answer [from his wives], they reminisced, saying, “But how do we compare to him? Allah (ﷻ) has forgiven him his mistakes, past and future.” Then one of them said, “As for me, I am going to pray the rest of the nights in my life.” And then another [the sec-

ond of them] said, “I shall fast forever [every day], and not break [miss] a day of fasting.” And then another [the third of them] said, “I shall abandon the marital relationship and never get married.” Then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came to them and said, “*Are you those who have said such and such [as above]? For, by Allah, I am the most dedicated and most observant of His presence. But I fast and break my fast; and I pray and go to sleep; and I get married. And [hence] whoever detaches himself from my life pattern is not of me [does not belong to me].*”<sup>626</sup>

This indicates that in human nature, there is a desire out of an internal pulse to be devoted to Allah (ﷻ) to do more than He is expecting. This is why the example of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) is necessary: he explained and demonstrated to the rest of us how to be devoted to Allah (ﷻ), and how to execute the meanings of the Qur’an. Left to our own devices, we can easily misinterpret Allah’s (ﷻ) *āyāt* and go into directions that take us away from discharging the responsibilities He has given us. It cannot be overemphasized that the desire to be more prophetic than the Prophet (ﷺ) can happen to anyone, at anytime. And this tendency toward *ghulūw* does not only affect Muslims, Christians, and Jews, it also impinges upon non-scriptured peoples such as atheists and materialists, who similarly display an urge to go to the extreme in whatever ideology or system of behavior they belong to.

This strain of behavior exists in some orders of Sufis. They try to prove their affinity to Allah (ﷻ) by giving up some of the vital energies and responsibilities of life, by withdrawing from society and from interacting with other human beings. As a permanent disposition, the above conduct is an example of *ghulūw*, and it cannot be sustained by the *āyāt* of the Qur’an or the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ). Quite to the contrary, to link up with Allah (ﷻ), the Muslim has to be involved in the duties and responsibilities that come his way from Him; in that involvement, he becomes closer to Him. Similar to the Sufi inclination is the apolitical bent of Jamā’ah al-Tabligh, which seeks to clean up the individual Muslim’s personal

attachment and devotion to Allah (ﷻ), dismissing altogether any thought that political engagement in the pursuit of reversing societal injustice probably has more to do with gravitating toward Allah (ﷻ) than punctilious devotional and anonymous charity-giving activities.

Polar opposite to the Sufis are those Muslims who have condensed all social engagement along with the vast meanings of the Qur'an and the Hadith down into only the matters of jihad and *qitāl* (organized military combat). This pertains to certain contemporary *salafis*, more particularly the Anglo-Wahhābī strain — financed and coached by the illegitimate Saudi royal syndicate, and given safe passage across borders by Washington and Tel Aviv — that is now popping up all over the Muslim world. Everything to this peculiar expression of *ghulūw* has become jihad and *qitāl*.

One exceedingly disturbing corollary to the Wahhābī expression of *ghulūw* is what has come to be known as *takfīr* (designating another Muslim as a *kāfir*). *Takfīr* as a narrow and parochial methodology of judging the devotional character of others, coupled with the hyper-inclination toward jihad and *qitāl*, provides the erroneous arguments to justify the murder of scores of thousands of Muslims by these holier-than-thou Wahhābīs, who are too naive to see they are dupes of a foreign expansionist and occupation oriented agenda. Though this concept did not exist at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), it did not take long after he passed away for it to settle into Muslim consciousness, and 14 centuries of *takfīrī* bloodletting between Muslims is a testament to its durability, its divisiveness, and its preference as a tool of choice in the hands of Muslim enemies. At the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), and during the *khilāfaḥs* of Abū Bakr, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, and 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, no Muslim was running around accusing other Muslims of being *kāfirs*. The first accusation of *takfīr* coincided with the *taḥkīm* (arbitration) that took place after the Battle of Şiffin between the forces of Imam 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and the confederates of the secessionist and would-be king, Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān.

As Şiffin was drawing toward a decisive victory for Imam 'Alī, with the forces of Mu'āwiyah on the losing side, the latter decided

to play a trick by hoisting copies of the Qur'an onto the ends of his soldiers' spears, ostensibly suggesting that the matter ought to be decided by the Book of Allah (ﷻ), but stealthily counting on delaying tactics to allow his forces to regroup and then resume the fight. The trick worked, as a sizeable contingent from Imam 'Alī's camp, later to become known as the Khawārij (the Kharijites), began to fall in behind the slogan, "*Lā ḥukma illā li-allāh*: There is no governance except that which belongs to Allah." Imam 'Alī tried in vain to convince them to continue the campaign until Mu'āwiyah's faction was vanquished, all of which was close at hand. However, not only was their stand of suspending their participation in the military engagement intractable, but they also pressured Imam 'Alī into appointing Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī as his negotiator in the *taḥkīm* instead of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās, who was the Imam's original choice.

Those who are aware of the background of the Khawārij — and not many Muslims care to be — recognize that their opposition to Imam 'Alī's decisions was not some sort of simple aberration or situation-specific mistake. There was a history behind their behavior, and there were immutable social forces at work. At the time of the *taḥkīm*, the vast majority of those who ultimately became the Khawārij were descendants, relatives, remnants, and tribal associates of the *murtaddūn*, who had resettled in Iraq after their forebears in the Arabian Peninsula had been roundly defeated by the Prophet (ﷺ) and Abū Bakr in Ḥurūb al-Riddah (Wars of Renunciation).<sup>627</sup> The simmering *'aṣabīyah* (tribal solidarity, nationalism) against Quraysh, which had caused some of the Khawārij ancestors to claim prophethood and separate from the Islamic dominion whose base was in Makkah and Madinah, was still festering in their descendants. Many of them still had a problem with what they considered to be a Qurayshī "monopoly" on power. And so, at this critical juncture of Islamic history, when the result of the *taḥkīm* declared Mu'āwiyah to be the next leader of the Muslims, it was they who rejected the very idea of a *taḥkīm* and the results of it. After the *taḥkīm*, they announced that the enemies of the Muslims were now 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib, Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān, and 'Amr

ibn al-ʿĀs, and that to set things straight in the Ummah, all three should be killed. In order to rationalize killing the three men, they argued that all three were *kāfirs*. *Takfīr* was born as a result of these circumstances and experiences.

In Khawārij literature, the word *ḥukm* or *ḥākimiyyah* (rule or governance) is frequently employed, as in *ḥukm allāh* (rule of Allah – ﷻ) and *ḥukm al-ʿibād* (rule of the subjects of Allah – ﷻ). In using these words or their derivatives, Khawārij intellectuals were speaking about delegitimizing either a legitimate ruler (that is, Imam ʿAlī), or another who is competing to be the ruler of the Muslims (that is, Muʿāwiyah). In modern times, over the last 100 years, the first Islamic thinker to resuscitate the use of these words was the prolific Islamic intellectual of the Indian subcontinent, Abū al-ʿAlā Mawdūdī, who emphasized the word *ḥākimiyyah* in his writings from 1936–1941. In India at that time, he saw that the Muslims were not ruling themselves, and that they were being ruled by non-Muslims; hence, he zeroed in on this term from early Islamic history in order to inspire the Muslims to pursue the responsibility of their own governance. Unlike the Khawārij who used the same words in a different context, Mawdūdī underscored the importance of the concept in a venue where the Muslims had no ruler, no self-determination, and no grand jurisdiction to call their own.

Here is where, in our contemporary time, a misunderstanding or a non-understanding of Islamic words — even by notable Islamic thinkers — surfaces. The word *ḥukm* (rule, governance) is a Qurʿanic and prophetic word,

**Are you not aware of those who claim they are committed to what has been bestowed from on high upon you, [O Prophet], as well as in what was bestowed from on high before you, [and yet] are willing to defer to the rule of the concentrated and excessive powers of evil (...*yurīdūna an yataḥākamū ilā al-ṭāghūt*) — although they were bidden to deny it, seeing that Satan but wants to lead them far astray? (4:60).**

Hence, judge (*wa-an ihkum...*) between them [followers of earlier revelation] in accordance with what Allah has bestowed from on high, and do not follow their errant views; and beware of them, lest they tempt you away from any of what Allah has bestowed from on high upon you... (5:49).

But governance (*al-ḥukm*) rests with Allah alone — [and] He has ordained that you should conform to none but Him: this is the *dīn* that stands out; but most people know it not (12:40).

On the other hand, the word *walāyah* (obeisance, reverence, deference), another underdeveloped concept in the Muslim public mind that confuses it with the meaning of *ḥukm*, is also a Qur'anic and prophetic word,

For, all who ally themselves (*wa-man yatawalla...*) with Allah and His Apostle and those who are securely committed — behold, it is they, the partisans of Allah, who shall be victorious! (5:56).

For thus it is: all obeisance (*hunālika al-walāyah...*) belongs to Allah alone, the True One. He is the best to grant recompense, and the best to determine what is to be (18:44).

In the Sunnī field of thinking, their scholars rarely use the counterpart of *ḥukm*, which is *walāyah*.<sup>628</sup> Conversely, in the Shī'ī field of thinking, their intellectuals rarely use the word *ḥukm* (except in the *fiqhī* sphere or in a more localized context), but they profusely use the word *walāyah*. Thus there are two types of thinkers in two almost mutually exclusive spheres of activities who use particular words while avoiding other specific words. Whatever half of the Muslim mind one happens to belong to, he has a difficult time making a distinction between *walāyah* on the one hand and *ḥukm* on the other.



This dichotomy, which need not exist among Muslims, is evidence of what this *āyah* calls *ghulūw* (fanaticism, zealotry).

This *ghulūw* reveals itself in the way other Qur'anic and prophetic words are applied. There is more concentration on one word in a particular context, and more concentration on its counterpart in the other context. For instance, consider how the Sunnīs and Shī'īs make use of the words *imam* and *khalīfah*. The word *khalīfah* has both a Qur'anic and a historical meaning, and the two should not be confused. In the Qur'an, Allah (ﷻ) creates someone to do His will on earth, **“And lo! Your Sustainer said unto the angels, ‘Behold, I am about to render on earth a *khalīfah* [successor].’” (2:30)**. The word is often variously rendered in English as *vicegerent*, *representative*, or *deputy*. Qur'anically speaking, *khilāfah* occurs when there is an involvement of Allah's (ﷻ) will with man's will. Historically, however, the word *khalīfah* simply means a successor to the Prophet (ﷺ) in his role as leader of the Muslims. The Sunnīs, who are the ones to almost exclusively employ this word to designate the leader of the Muslims, uncritically apply the term in a blanket fashion, even to kings, princes, and generals who usurped power without bothering to obtain the legal *bay'ah* (allegiance) of the rank-and-file Muslim. The Shī'īs, who almost never use the term even though it is a Qur'anic word, only deploy it in a derogatory manner, referring to its misapplication to kings like Mu'āwiyah and his son, Yazīd.

Insofar as the word *imam* is concerned, Allah (ﷻ) said in the matter of Ibrāhīm (ؑ), **“And [remember this]: when his Sustainer tried Ibrāhīm by [His] commandments and the latter fulfilled them, He said, ‘Behold, I shall make you a leader (*imam*) of men’” (2:124)**. Even though *imam* is a Qur'anic and prophetic word, it is rarely used by Sunnīs except to designate the one who leads the *ṣalāh* in the *masjid* or to refer to the progenitors of four of their major schools of thought: Abū Hanīfah, Mālik, al-Shāfi'ī, and Aḥmad ibn Hanbal. But they rarely use the term to describe the overall leader of the Muslims. On the other hand, most Shī'īs, who use this term much more than the Sunnīs, apply it to the leader of the Muslims, but they overreach by attaching divine characteristics to its usage and application.

The same can be said about how these two halves of the Muslim public mind attend to the words *imam* and *ummaḥ*, which are both Qur'anic and prophetic words. One side of the Muslim mind (Shī'ī) says the imam is *ma'ṣūm* (safeguarded from sin), while the other side (Sunnī) says the *ummaḥ* is impeccable. The latter position is based on a hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ) in which he said, "It is impossible for my *ummaḥ* to have a false consensus [or a consensus about a false issue]." <sup>629</sup> If both sides ever tried to synthesize what these words mean in the real world, the first thing they should ask each other is whether it is possible to have an *ummaḥ* without an imam or vice versa. All of these are demonstrations of how *ghulūw* has taken the Muslim public mind into wildly rancorous tangents, dividing it to the point where any thought of reconciliation is laughed at by Muslim detractors and subversives. To close out the discussion on *ghulūw* within the Islamic realm, it is fitting to cite a prophetic hadith,

*I caution you against these extremist tendencies pertaining to the dīn, because this fanaticism (ghulūw) caused those who preceded you to perish.* <sup>630</sup>

### **This Islamic Modus Operandi Is Inconsistent with "Theocracy"**

The historical and everlasting fact that dwells between divinity and humanity is the fact that God is superior in every sense of the word and mankind is inferior in every sense of the word. God's superiority does not generate arrogance. Man's inferiority does not generate humiliation. God is infinitely merciful; humankind is always in need of mercy and guidance. Allah (ﷻ) is gloriously free from control and constraint; mankind is in perpetual need of counsel and guidance.

Diluting this relationship are all erroneous ideas and baseless notions claiming that God has a begotten son, that angels are an offspring of God, or that God is physically diffused into humans; all such claims are nullified by the following unequivocal words,

**Never will the Messiah feel too proud to be Allah's [conforming] subject, nor so the angels who are near**

unto Him. And those who feel too proud to abide by Him and glory in their arrogance [should know that on Judgment Day] He will gather them all unto Himself. Whereupon unto those who committed themselves [to Him] and did good deeds, He will grant their just rewards, and give them yet more out of His bounty; whereas those who felt too proud and gloried in their arrogance, He will chastise with grievous suffering, and they shall find none to protect them from Allah, and none to bring them support (4:172–173).

As the reader moves through this Qur'an of truth, he is left with the unmistakable impression that the fact of Allah's (ﷻ) oneness is stated so clearly, so emphatically, and so repeatedly. Nothing in the human pool of ideas or actions can be superimposed on Allah (ﷻ). There is no iconic mental representation of Allah (ﷻ). No perceived idea can reconstruct His being. Absolutely nothing can partake in His essence, attribute, or self. There is an emphasis in His words here in this Qur'an upon the human adherence to Allah (ﷻ), upon man's relationship with Him. Allah (ﷻ) is the deity and mankind is the humanity. Everything and everyone are His subjects and dependents. This mental and spiritual relationship with Allah (ﷻ) as superior and humans as juniors vividly shines throughout the chapters and verses of this meticulously recorded scripture.

This historical and human fact runs the course of scriptural and prophetic history. Each prophet's lifetime was spent in a struggle to affirm and spread this certainty, consciousness, and being. All scriptural leaders lived a life in which they drew an accentuated line between divinity and humanity, between God and man, and between absolute authority and those who are in need of it. This truth has been taken out of educational curricula and the rudimentary building blocks of the public mind. The whole integrated history that extends from Noah to Muhammad (ﷺ) is virtually omitted from the consciousness of man. The scriptural and prophetic call that has rung across generations and civilizations has

always been the same, **“O [my] people! Confirm [and conform to] Allah; you have no deity except Him” (7:59).**

This has been the bedrock of scripture. And even though it has been the common denominator among all prophets, it is interesting and bewildering to see how human societies have stepped away from this fact. For reasons related to power, race, and ego establishmentarian religion and ritualistic governments have found respite in promoting a God sibling, a personification of God, or a blurred line between what is human and what is divine. The connectedness between the divine and the human flows through the spiritual and mental attachment of the two. Man’s mind and his ideas will never flow naturally until there is a workable understanding of who is divine — and thus the only authority — and who is human — thereby the recipient of that authority.

Allah (ﷻ) is the only God there is. Humans are in an inferior position to Him. He is the Creator; humans are created beings. Allah (ﷻ) is the master, owner, and director and we are His captives, juniors, and subordinates. All human beings are equally so; there is no chosen people who are naturally or genetically above others on this scale. Allah (ﷻ) has not chosen an individual to be His son and He has not chosen a race to be His people. He has not entered into the physical condition of His created humans. No human or humans have a kinship relationship with Allah (ﷻ). There is, though, a “discernment” of the divine presence that is available to every individual and every people by which the attachment to Allah (ﷻ) becomes fervent and fruitful, and that is man’s active avoidance of Allah’s (ﷻ) corrective power. Those who are active in interacting with the Qur’an understand this to be *taqwá* (which is often erroneously and wrongly associated with secular definitions of *piety*).

Humanity will never reach the standard of equality and the status of fraternal interaction until it acknowledges this relationship with Allah (ﷻ) and until it honors Him as its sole authoritative deity and divine authority. This renders Him available to all races, all classes, and all generations, putting an end to racism, nationalism, and elitism in all its ideological, political, and eco-

conomic expressions. In a world such as this, whenever human maturity ascends to it, all claims to intervention and arbitration between God and man will have ended. Those religious, political, and economic classes that lived off a “special relationship” with God will be discontinued. Short of this, there will remain parasitic classes who will interpose themselves between divinity and humanity, between God and man.

In light of this, the correct understanding of the relationship between God and man, its transnational implications, its multi-religious impact, and its global consequences, cannot be relegated to the domain of theory and philosophy. More practically, and with a view to accessing the only chance humanity has at having peace, security, and universal social justice, the whole world order has to be molded in this fashion and according to this integral Islamic understanding of God and man.

Think of a world in which man’s intellect is fertilized by scripture — a scripture free of wheeling and dealing, a holy Book preserved exactly the way it was revealed without any tampering or deletions. Think of a world that acknowledges only the authority of Allah (ﷻ) and His law. Then think about how this is going to be organized in the absence of aggressive militaries, autocratic governments, and big money, corporate greed, and financial empires. The only thing left to help organize this colossal program is the germinating knowledge of people coming into contact with other people. This would be a world without discriminatory borders, prejudiced laws, and nationalistic restrictions. The grassroots sentiments and the *masjid* hubs will become the focus of attention and socialization. Such a global civil society would have no “hierarchical religion” or corporate governments that enslave populations and steal resources.

Islam has never been a “church” imposing its interpretation of scripture on excluded masses of people. The Qur’an and Muhammad (ﷺ) have always been accessible and open to all and sundry. They remain like that. They will continue to be so as long as there is life on earth and intelligence in the mind. This is because in Islam, among other ideas and concepts, there is no such thing as a *theocracy*. When there are people who administer, organize, man-

age, and rule in an Islamic society they do so with the active participation of the common people around. There is nothing in this Islamic setting that even remotely parallels what is called in the Euro-West *divine right*.<sup>631</sup> The Islamic method of governance is traced to the human intelligent and intellectual interaction with the Qur'an and the understanding of Muhammad (ﷺ). This has not been in vogue now for centuries. Today, with all the revelations of history that were previously covered up for centuries, there ought to be no doubt that church centered Europe was influenced in a positive way by the model of Islamic governance via the Crusades. This military assault on the Muslims in the Holy Land resulted in a positive "theological blowback" and social outcome that fertilized and germinated the Protestant movement in Europe.<sup>632</sup>

A class of religious individuals who rule in the name of God without popular participation or consent, grassroots input, and involvement of the average person, who is also in an honorable relationship with God, has become the historical deviation of religious rulers throughout European history, otherwise referred to as theocracy. It is said that theocracy comes from the Greek word *theokratia* meaning *the rule of God*. In a theocracy, the people or tribes are thought to be ruled directly by God. There is no participatory rule through a common and consolidated understanding of God's laws via the human intellect and the "popular mind." This departure from scriptural standard may be traced back to ancient "Israel." It may also be detected in differing degrees in John Calvin's commonwealth at Geneva, in early New England, or even in some Muslim dynasties. In the Judeo-Christian tradition the word *theocracy* was first used by Josephus, who contrasted it to monarchy and democracy, to describe the system of government at the time of Moses (ﷺ).<sup>633</sup> He writes of the nomadic shepherd's need to be completely free of human interference, but yet to depend on the guidance and leadership of a divine being, to live out a fulfilled life.<sup>634</sup>

In the Judeo-Christian experience, popular scriptural engagement is absent from formulating a government on the basis of "thought-out revelation," and thus according to Jewish and Christian theologians and historians, there were leaders like Moses and

Solomon (ﷺ), or perhaps judges like Gideon and Deborah, or even a Nazirite like Samson, who all ruled according to God's will.<sup>635</sup> Yet it was not these individuals who were actually governing; the popular impression in a theocracy is that God is governing through human agents. Such a theocratic government, it is said, was first established in Sinai. God demanded pledges of the people, and God was committed to their welfare and support. Even the annual Covenant meal emphasized once again the importance of this theocratic relationship (Exodus, 24:3–11). The basic ingredient, if such a state is to succeed, is the loyalty and trust of the people, not their ideological involvement, political participation, and everyday engagement. In this Old Testament conviction, God's symbolic presence in the tabernacle, between the cherubim, was the assurance of God's continued guidance and direction, as was the system of the twelve tribes, the burnt offerings, and the ark.<sup>636</sup> The medieval concepts of feudalism and of the divine right of kings adopted much of their philosophical foundations from that of the Old Testament theocracy, except that the intermediaries of God's authority were now dukes, barons, bishops, and kings.<sup>637</sup>

Much as European written history would like to deny it, the military assaults against the Muslims during the time of the Crusades, as well as the uneasy contact between Islamic rule in Andalusia (the Iberian subcontinent) and the Catholic Church throughout Europe, caused the historic theological tsunami within the church defined and church centered "Christianity" of Europe in those times. Today, we Muslims should feel a sense of innocent pride in the positive Islamic influence that caused the "European" God-given mind to rise up and protest the Catholic Church's monopoly on religion and the Bible. Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Ulrich Zwingli were a wake-up call for a Europe laboring under the irrationality of church clergymen.<sup>638</sup>

The Protestant Reformation movement, erupting in an irrational church controlled Europe, was clearly influenced by the Islamic theological understanding of the relationship between God and man, and by extension between temporal authority and the people. The Islamic concept, well entrenched in southwest Europe

(Spain and Portugal), and the Islamic way of life, upon which the Crusaders prosecuted their “holy war,” had a constructive and useful impact upon the Europeans whose minds were yearning for a straightforward and uncomplicated relationship with God unencumbered by Church officialdom. The spirit of equality that permeates the Muslim mind and society finally expressed itself in taking away much of the holiness and even “godliness” that was part of the Church and its ecclesiastical higher-ups. The theoretical concept of Islamic governance, even though not thoroughly practiced from time to time and from land to land had its forceful reverberations on a Europe attuned to a particular theocracy, which had no relevance in an Islamic order of citizenry and decision makers. In the Islamic view of things, as all and sundry objective observers know, only a divinity reveals an impeccable law and then a humanity collectively and consultatively interprets that law, with the understanding that all human effort contains a probable flaw, which is correctable by the ambition for improvement and better alignment with the divine program.

All of this European misrule by an inaccurate church account of scripture derives from the misunderstanding and doctrinal misrepresentation of Jesus (ﷺ). The Qur’an here sweeps away all this trivial fuss as it records Jesus’ (ﷺ) own words on the subject, which proclaim the truth about the assertion that he is God’s son, about the holy spirit, and about any superstitious belief that God would have a corporeal son or a parallel deity in any way, fashion, or form. The word of Allah (ﷻ), this vocal Qur’an, says here in no uncertain terms that Jesus, the son of Mary (ﷺ), is an *‘abd* (a subordinate and subject) of Allah (ﷻ), and that he will never be so vain as to make light of being Allah’s (ﷻ) dependent and underling. The same goes for the angels: they, too, are servants and attendants of Allah (ﷻ), and will never avoid stating this fact. All created beings will eventually find recourse to Allah (ﷻ): those who try to avoid the responsibilities of being Allah’s (ﷻ) subjects and lessers will have to await a painful punishment, while those who affirm this subordination to Allah (ﷻ) shall anticipate the reward supreme,



Never will the Messiah feel too proud to be Allah's servant, nor will the angels who are near to Him. And those who feel too proud to serve Him and glory in their arrogance [should know that on Judgment Day] He will gather them all unto Himself, whereupon those who committed themselves [to him in servitude] and did good deeds He will grant their just rewards, and give them yet more out of His bounty; while those who felt too proud and gloried in their arrogance He will castigate with grievous suffering: and they shall find none to protect them from Allah, and none to bring them support (4:172–173).

Jesus, the Messiah, the son of Mary (ﷺ), will not feel emotionally harmed to say the truth: that he is a servant and subordinate of God. He is after all Allah's Apostle and Prophet (ﷺ). He is in the best position to differentiate between who is divine and who is human, and to realize that these two descriptions are exclusive enough so as not to intertwine. He knows very well that he was created by Allah (ﷻ) and that created beings cannot be God or an integral part of God. He knows that human subordination to God does not disparage or dehumanize a person. This human subordination and conformity to Allah (ﷻ) — *'ubūdiyyah* — is what in real life honors an individual and improves the quality of social life. It is a God-denier who refuses to place himself in this compatible and harmonious relationship with Allah (ﷻ). Allah's Prophets (ﷺ) are specifically identified as His conforming subjects. The angels also profess this fact and willingly state the truth about their relationship with Allah (ﷻ) — no hesitation, no apologies, and no "compromise of character."

The problem with the church is that it cannot come around to affirming the humanity and the servitude of Jesus (ﷺ) to Allah (ﷻ), thereby negating the divine character it attributes to Jesus (ﷺ), which, he himself, readily and comfortably denies,

Never did [and never will] the Messiah feel too proud to be Allah's subject, nor do the angels who are near unto Him. And those who feel too proud to serve Him and glory in their arrogance [should know that on Judgment Day] He will gather them all unto Himself (4:172).

At times the church itself seems to display an air of overbearing pride and presumption. To this day there is no official word from the church that it is the Christians of the Holy Land who saw in Islam, the Qur'an, and Muhammad the true message of Jesus (ﷺ), without contradictions, without contentions, and without complexes. They did not "compromise" their Christian character when they acknowledged the truth about God, Christ, and Mary (ﷺ). Those early Christians, who from their 7th century onward reaffirmed their Christian convictions with the recognition of the truth in Allah's (ﷻ) final scripture, did so by sustaining the truth, by confirming their human nature and the human nature of Jesus (ﷺ), and then by going on to do what is right. This human behavior deserves the best Allah (ﷻ) has awaiting it, **"...while those who felt too proud and gloried in their arrogance He will admonish with grievous suffering: and they shall find none to protect them from Allah, and none to bring them support."**

This Qur'an, Allah's (ﷻ) word, does not want to make it hard for Christians who have been misled by false church doctrine to correct themselves. It wants Christians to realize that Jesus (ﷺ) in this last Revelation is always referred to as the **"...son of Mary."** Mary (ﷺ) herself was born of two mortal human beings — father and mother. How then can she be a divinity? A divinity is immortal, infinite, and ageless. Therefore, Mary and Jesus (ﷺ) are not gods or proportions of God. In the Qur'an, Mary (ﷺ) has been mentioned around 30 times by name, while no other woman has been mentioned by name. This seems to be in anticipation of those who seek to deify her; the emphasis in this holy Text is on her human nature, her humanity, and her humanness. The Qur'an excludes the two extremes about Mary and Jesus (ﷺ): the "Jewish"

extreme that denigrates both to immoral humans, and the “Christian” extreme that elevates both to immortal Gods.

The Qur’an, when it refers to Jesus (ﷺ), uses four designations: ‘Īsá, al-Masīḥ (the Messiah), *kalimah* (word), and *rūḥ* (soul). The Arabic (or Semitic) word ‘Īsá is represented by what came to be known in some Latin-based languages as *Jesus*; thus ‘Īsá refers to Jesus (ﷺ) in a name-to-name association. The word *masīḥ* is derived from the root word *masaha*, which means *to wipe, to wipe out, to wipe clean, to blot out; or to rub with oil, to anoint*. Generally and specifically, whenever the designation al-Masīḥ is used, it is understood to refer to the Christ Jesus (ﷺ), the Messiah — or the anointed one. In this context, the appellation *kalimah* means that Jesus (ﷺ) was born as a consequence of Allah (ﷻ) pronouncing the word of genesis, *kun* (be), and thus he was created as a human being without a biological father. As to what may be meant by *rūḥun minhu* (a soul from Him), it may refer to the fact that the Archangel Gabriel (ﷺ) breathed out to make it possible for Jesus (ﷺ) to be born. The act of exhalation is called *nafkh*. There may be a linguistic and philosophical phonological relationship between the two Arabic words *rūḥ* (soul) and *rīḥ* (wind). The exhalation may amount to a puff that initiates from the soul, that is, *rīḥ* commences from *rūḥ*. However, this particular inception of Jesus (ﷺ) does not make him a divinity or a deity. This lesson is meant to help people who have a misunderstanding about Jesus (ﷺ) and the oneness of God to correct their views and to assert the truth herein: there is only one God and Jesus, like all other Prophets (ﷺ), is His noble prophet.

### The Qur’an Is What Contents the Soul

The *āyah* to follow is the corroboration of the fact that this concluding Testament (the Qur’an) is a confirmation of earlier testaments and the final word on issues that have divided people who consider themselves People of the Book. The assurance, the confidence, and the trust that are emitted from this Book and its *āyāt* is captivating. This is an opportunity for the mind to find its mooring

and for the soul to find its serenity. There is always an opening in this forthright Book for people who are looking for the truth; here they will find the confidence that comes with the truth and the tranquility that comes with certainty,

**O mankind! A manifestation of the truth has now come to you from your Sustainer, and We have sent down to you a glowing [convincing and cogent] light. And as for those who have committed themselves to Allah and hold fast unto Him, He will enfold them within His grace and bounty, and guide them unto Himself by a direct thruway (4:174–175).**

This Qur'an carries evidence of the truth on the grounds of reason. **“O people! An expression of the truth [and proof thereof] has come to you from your Sustainer...”** The quality of language, the quality of ideas, and the quality of justness that our minds and hearts meet here in this Book are associated neither with pride nor prejudice. This Book with all its titanic information cannot be the work of an Arab born in Makkah, a city located in a deeply nomadic and uneducated society on the fringes of civilization. The proof of this truth has come to all the people of the world in the life and character of Muhammad (ﷺ). The *āyāt* above have exposed the mistaken and false beliefs of Jews and Christians, the hostility of people with multiple and conflicting allegiances (*mushriks*), and the duplicity of “Muslim turncoats” (*munāfiqs*), who are any Islamic enemy’s Trojan horse. The unvarnished nature of all these classes of people was laid bare by the words of justice and truth in this factual Qur’an. There is no better time than today to reiterate the veracity and forthrightness of the Qur’an and the Prophet (ﷺ).

With the concluding *āyāt* of this *sūrah*, people everywhere are now privy to the proof of prophethood that has come courtesy of the Lord and Sustainer. It is this Book of authenticity that sets the standards of commitment to Allah (ﷻ) and enunciates the laws that behoove a God-conscious society. In front of us now are the details and the precedent of a prophet’s lifetime; and this prophet

is Muhammad (ﷺ) — the trustworthy Arab who hails from neither the Jewish tradition nor the Christian tradition. His lifelong struggle is there for everyone to think about and understand. He surfaced in Arabia without being polluted by the habits and norms of that remote hinterland and its wayward customs. The evidence of Allah's (ﷻ) guiding hand was his assumption of the responsibilities and tasks of prophethood.

Along with this proof of prophethood came the distinct and enlightening Book — this Qur'an. And like the *Sīrah* of the holy Prophet (ﷺ), there is the history of the holy Book: how it was compiled and scripted; the vocalization of its consonants and verbs; the *qurrā'* (those who delivered the verbal Qur'an — in their validated accent, phraseology, and wording — without any conflicting meaning); its flexible Semitic Arabic language and the influence it had on the language itself; the "Arabic identity" as a mental feature of its text and composition; the ethics and mannerism that run through it; the scientific facts therein; etc. With all of this meticulous attention to its preservation and absorption, and with the words of Allah (ﷻ) as a guarantee, **"Behold, it is We Ourselves who have made accessible, step by step, this conscience-builder [the Qur'an], and behold, it is We who shall truly guard it [from all corruption]" (15:9)**, what we have today in the Qur'an is precisely the same — letter for letter and word for word — as that which was revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ) 14 centuries ago.

A person whose mind is in this Qur'an begins to feel free, unburdened with the uncertainties around, and clear on all the issues that have caused so many problems in life and existence. The more a heart and mind delve into the meanings of this Qur'an the more calm, confident, and clear a person becomes, **"And We have sent down to you a lucid light..."** This internal light coming from the spoken word, once it is understood, amounts to the freedom people are looking for. Understanding what Allah (ﷻ) is saying is a form of freedom that is impossible to deliver by means of armies and material wherewithal. When we understand what Allah (ﷻ) is telling us, we are with Him; and when we feel and know we are with Him, we are truly and existentially free. This sense of freedom

moves us to a relationship with Allah (ﷻ), **“And as for those who have committed themselves to Allah and hold fast to Him, He will enfold them within His grace and privilege, and guide them to Himself by a straight way.”**

Humanity is looking for a straight way out of its troubling times, false starts, and everything-goes delusion. Nothing seems to be working; market forces, ideological pontificating, religious self-righteousness, and “get-away-from-it-all” escapism are not providing contentment and fulfilment. Nothing is working because the soul has not met its satisfaction. The soul can only be at peace once it reharmonizes itself with the truth. And it is the expression of the truth we are all yearning for that the Qur’an is announcing loudly and clearly. We just have to listen.

We have to understand that when the Qur’an is no longer a book of ideology, providing us with answers to the orientation that characterizes our collective thinking and our visionary horizons, then false ideologies will move in and fill that vacuum. We have to understand that when the Qur’an stops providing us with values and ethics that are meant to be durable and cohesive, then some other set of values and ethics, less reliable and more troublesome, will move into our lives and present itself as the value system that is suited for human society. We have to understand that if the Qur’an does not offer us answers to the social justice dilemmas we are having to grapple with — poverty, illiteracy, maldistribution of wealth and food, degradation of the environment, wars of occupation, etc. — then some of us will improvise theories and “-isms” that will try to offer us what we fail to understand and apply from this holy Reference. And, finally, if the Qur’an does not answer the “religious” or “theological” questions we have, we will forge our own “religions” sponsored by churches, synagogues, temples, and, yes, *masjids*. This accessible and vivid Qur’an leaves no room for us to invent ideologies and fabricate philosophies that will ultimately lead to a lovesick life and the absence of certainty. When we have this Qur’an, there is no need for all that.

## Man Needs Guidance in Both His Spiritual and Practical Life

They will ask you [O Muhammad] to enlighten them. Say, “Allah enlightens you [thus] about the laws concerning [inheritance from] those who leave no heir in the direct line [of inheritance]: if a man dies childless and has a sister, she shall inherit one-half of what he has left, just as he shall inherit from her if she dies childless. But if there are two sisters, both [together] shall have two-thirds of what he has left; and if there are brothers and sisters, then the male shall have the equal of two females’ share.” Allah makes [all this] clear to you, lest you go astray; and Allah knows everything (4:176).

Just as this *sūrah* began with a concentration on family issues, it has come to a conclusion with an *āyah* pertaining to family issues. This ending *āyah* gives direction and information on the inheritance distribution when it comes to the death of a person who has neither an ascending hierarchy of heirs nor a descending hierarchy of heirs. This is a follow-up from a portion of a previous *āyah* that says,

And if a man or a woman has no heir in the direct line, but has a brother or a sister, then each of these two shall inherit one-sixth; but if there are more than two, then they shall share in one-third [of the inheritance], after [the deduction of] any bequest that may have been made, or any debt [that may have been incurred], neither of which having been intended to harm [the heirs]. [This is] a dictation from Allah: and Allah is all-knowing, forbearing (4:12).

The last *āyah* of *Sūrah al-Nisā'* provides a conclusion about the *kalālah* (inheritance in the absence of a living father and a living son). Hence, if the deceased has no living father or son to inherit him but has a sister (or half-sister from his father’s side), then she

shall inherit half of what her brother has left behind. Similarly, if this were to be reversed, meaning that there is a female deceased who did not leave a living father or son to inherit her, but she has a brother (or half-brother from her father's side), then he shall inherit whatever she has left behind after her debt and legal will are cleared — that is, her right to assign a third of her inheritance (*waṣīyah*).

If there are two consanguine sisters (*shaqīqatān*) or two sisters from the father's side then they qualify for two-thirds of their deceased brother's inheritance. In the case of multiple brothers and sisters, the general rule of inheritance applies: the male has two shares and the female has one share. Finally, in case there are consanguine brothers and consanguine sisters along side half-brothers and half-sisters, then the former disqualify the latter, according to some Islamic schools of thought.

The first discussion about *kalālah* in *āyah* 4:12 of this *sūrah* dealt with the inheritance of the deceased's half-brothers and half-sisters on the mother's side. The final *āyah* here talks about *kalālah* inheritance on the father's side. Because of how these issues can become confusing to some people, it is reported that 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said, "There are three issues that I wished Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) would have clarified further for us: *al-kalālah*, *al-ribā*, and *al-khilāfah* [inheritance when there is no living father or living son, usury, and political succession]." <sup>639</sup>

For the sake of more clarification, but without the hairsplitting details that are to be found in the books of fiqh, a sister is allowed half her departed brother's inheritance when he has no living father or son. If the deceased has a son, his sister gets nothing. There is a consensual *fiqhī* opinion that says a sister does not inherit if their (brother and sister's) father is still alive. The brother of a deceased sister inherits all her wealth if she has no living father or son, "**...and he [the brother] inherits her [his sister] if she has no child.**" This *brother* is defined as a full genetic brother from both father and mother, or a brother from the father. If the deceased sister has a brother from her mother he gets only one-sixth of her inheritance. If the inheritors are two sisters or more (*sisters* here are defined as full genetic sisters, or sisters from a biological father)



they inherit two-thirds of what their deceased brother left behind. If the inheritors are a multiple number of brothers and sisters the inheritance “rule of thumb” applies: the male gets two shares and the female gets one share. If there are brothers and sisters from the mother they all portion off the remaining third of the inheritance, once again the male gets two parts for every one part a female gets.

What remains to be said here in passing is that a thread of common *fiqhī* opinion (mainstream ruling) places “sisters” and “daughters” on a par. There is another less popular *fiqhī* ruling that draws an eclipsing picture of the daughter of a deceased over his sister. In other words a sister does not inherit from her deceased brother if he has a daughter(s).

It is easy for a materialistic mind to say that this Qur’an should be concentrating on spiritual issues rather than on financial ones, as is the case at length in the beginning of this *sūrah* and very briefly here at the end. This type of comment comes from individuals who cannot see that human beings will never be able to do justice purely on the basis of spiritual refinement; hence the additional information from the ever-merciful Allah (ﷻ), who knows that without His help, justice in this affair cannot be achieved.

**“Allah elucidates [these issues] for you...”** Even if the overall program of life is Allah’s (ﷻ), the guiding light is His word, and the reference model is Muhammad (ﷺ), there is no amount of “general good will” resulting from “personal purification” that will discover an inheritance formula capable of doing justice to everyone. Without Allah’s guidance, the thinking mind with the best of intentions can go in many different directions, the majority of which will lead to upsetting the balance of justice, **“...lest you go astray.”** This would tell us that our minds are in need of Allah (ﷻ) just as our souls are.

We say we know many things in life; we profess to have discovered many unknowns, and we claim that we are able to do justice. But look at the world that operates outside the parameters of this illuminating Book; there is always tension between the sexes, there is always argumentation over family entitlements, and there are always social and financial imbalances from generation to genera-

tion and from region to region. What do we say about legislatures and judiciaries, religious figures and civilian personalities, philosophers and social scientists who barge into this area, telling us who inherits what, on what basis, and for what reasons? This is what we have in today's world. Almost anyone with power can legalize or counsel families on how to distribute a deceased person's estate, wealth, and holdings. This precise type of interference, which is accompanied by rationalizing philosophies and a larger "gestalt" based on the absence of scriptural information and a scriptural reference, is how man begins to "play God." It behooves the limitations of our humanity to appreciate the measureless and limitless knowledge of our deity — Allah (ﷻ), the Omniscient, "...and Allah is all-knowing of everything." ■

## Endnotes

440 Narrated by Zayd ibn Thābit and recorded by Imams al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Tirmidhī and Aḥmad ibn Hanbal.

عن زيد بن ثابت في هذه الآية فَمَا لَكُمْ فِي الْمُتَأَفِّقِينَ فَمَتَّيْنِ قَالَ رَجَعَ نَاسٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَوْمَ أُحُدٍ فَكَانَ النَّاسُ فِيهِمْ فَرِيقَيْنِ فَرِيقٌ يَقُولُ اقْتُلْهُمْ وَفَرِيقٌ يَقُولُ لَا فَنَزَلَتْ هَذِهِ الْآيَةُ فَمَا لَكُمْ فِي الْمُتَأَفِّقِينَ فَمَتَّيْنِ وَقَالَ إِنَّهَا طَيِّبَةٌ وَقَالَ إِنَّهَا تَنْفِي الْحَبَّتِ كَمَا تَنْفِي النَّارُ حَبَّتِ الْحَدِيدِ.

441 Narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās and recorded by al-'Awfī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Abū Salamah ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, al-Ḍaḥḥāk, and others who related similar renditions, with different words, but the same meaning.

442 Narrated by Jubayr ibn Muṭ'im and recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, al-Suyūṭī, and others.

(قال النبي) لبيس مئاً من دعا إلى عصبية. و لبيس مئاً من قاتل على عصبية. و لبيس مئاً من مات على عصبية. قلت يا رسول الله ما العصبية؟ قال (النبي) أن تعين قومك على الظلم.

443 The intelligence reorganization in the US refers to the **Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA)**. Signed by George W. Bush into law, the bill proposing the act was approved by a vote of 96–2 in the US Senate and by 336–75 in the US House of Representatives. The act formally created the position of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), and the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board. The act also requires the Department of Home-

land Security (DHS) to compare passenger flight information with federal watch lists for all foreign and domestic airline flights. As written, the act was composed of the following eight sections: (1) Reform of the intelligence community, also known as the National Security Intelligence Reform Act of 2004; (2) Federal Bureau of Investigation; (3) security clearances; (4) transportation security; (5) border protection, immigration, and visa matters; (6) terrorism prevention; (7) implementation of 9/11 Commission recommendations, also known as the 9/11 Commission Implementation Act of 2004; and (8) other matters.

- 444 Katherine Pflieger Shrader (for the Associated Press), *Analysts Are in Great Demand: Intelligence Agencies Scramble for Talent*. (Washington, DC: The Washington Post, News (A) section, December 30, 2004), p. A25. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A35070-2004-Dec29.html>

**Department of Homeland Security (DHS)** – created in 2001 by President George W. Bush in response to the 9/11 attack on New York and Washington, DC, it is a cabinet level department of the US federal government. Its mandate is to protect the United States and its territories from, and to respond to, terrorist attacks, man-made accidents, and natural disasters. As the third largest department of the US federal government, it employs more than 200,000 people, has a budget exceeding \$98 billion (2011), and has incorporated under its management 22 other agencies including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), Transportation Security Administration (TSA), US Coast Guard, US Secret Service, and US Customs Service.



America's 16 intelligence agencies, which are consolidated under the office of the Director of National Intelligence and collectively referred to as the US Intelligence Community, include:

1. **Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (AF ISR)** – provides policy, oversight, and guidance to all Air Force intelligence organizations. It organizes, trains, equips, and presents forces to conduct intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance for combatant commanders and the nation. The AF ISR Agency commander serves as the Service Cryptologic Element under NSA, and oversees Air Force Signals Intelligence activities.
2. **Army Intelligence (G-2)** – responsible for policy formulation, planning, programming, budgeting, management, staff supervision, evalua-

tion, and oversight for intelligence activities for the Department of the Army. It coordinates the five major military intelligence disciplines within the Army: Imagery Intelligence, Signals Intelligence, Human Intelligence, Measurement and Signature Intelligence, and Counterintelligence and Security Countermeasures.

3. **Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)** – see description below.
4. **Coast Guard Intelligence** – because of its unique access, emphasis, and expertise in the maritime domain Coast Guard Intelligence can collect and report intelligence that not only supports Coast Guard missions, but also supports national objectives. It provides timely, actionable, and relevant intelligence to shape Coast Guard operations, planning, and decision making.
5. **Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)** – see description below.
6. **Department of Energy Office of Intelligence and Counterintelligence** – responsible for the intelligence and counterintelligence activities throughout the Department of Energy complex, including nearly 30 intelligence and counterintelligence offices nationwide. The mission is to protect, enable, and represent the vast scientific brain trust resident in the department's laboratories and plants. The office protects vital national security information and technologies, representing intellectual property of incalculable value, and provides unmatched scientific and technical expertise to the US government so that it can respond to foreign intelligence, terrorist and cyber threats, and solve the hardest problems associated with US energy security.
7. **Department of Homeland Security Office of Intelligence and Analysis** – responsible for using information and intelligence from multiple sources to identify and assess current and future threats to the US. DHS Intelligence focuses on four strategic areas: (a) promoting understanding of threats through intelligence analysis; (b) collecting information and intelligence pertinent to homeland security; (c) sharing information necessary for action; and (d) managing intelligence for the homeland security enterprise.
8. **Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR)** – provides the secretary of state with timely, objective analysis of global developments as well as real-time insights from all-source intelligence. It serves as the focal point within the Department of State for all policy issues and activities involving the Intelligence Community. INR's expert, independent foreign affairs analysts draw on all-source intelligence, diplomatic reporting, INR's public opinion polling, and interaction with US and foreign scholars.
9. **Department of the Treasury Office of Intelligence and Analysis (OIA)** – responsible for the receipt, analysis, collation, and dissemination of foreign intelligence and foreign counterintelligence informa-

tion related to the operation and responsibilities of the Department of the Treasury. OIA is a component of the Treasury Department's Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence (TFI). TFI marshals the Department's intelligence and enforcement functions with the twin aims of safeguarding the financial system against illicit use and combating rogue nations, terrorist facilitators, weapons of mass destruction proliferators, money launderers, drug kingpins, and other national security threats.

10. **Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)** – responsible for enforcing the controlled substance laws and regulations of the United States. DEA's Office of National Security Intelligence (ONSI) facilitates full and appropriate intelligence coordination and information sharing with other members of the Intelligence Community and homeland security elements. Its goal is to enhance federal efforts to reduce the supply of drugs, protect national security, and combat global terrorism. DEA has 21 field divisions in the US and more than 80 offices in over 60 countries worldwide.
11. **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** – see description below.
12. **Marine Corps Intelligence** – The US Marine Corps produces tactical and operational intelligence for battlefield support. The department has service staff responsibility for geospatial intelligence, advanced geospatial intelligence, signals intelligence, human intelligence, counterintelligence, and ensures there is a single synchronized strategy for the development of Marine Corps intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance enterprise.
13. **National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA)** – see description of responsibilities below.
14. **National Reconnaissance Office (NRO)** – designs, builds and operates the nation's reconnaissance satellites. NRO products, provided to an expanding list of customers like the CIA and the Department of Defense, can warn of potential trouble spots around the world, help plan military operations, and monitor the environment.
15. **National Security Agency (NSA)** – see description below.
16. **Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI)** – the leading provider of maritime intelligence to the US Navy and joint warfighting forces, as well as national decision makers and other consumers in the Intelligence Community (source: <http://www.dni.gov/index.php/intelligence-community/members-of-the-ic>)

445 Ibid.

**GI Bill of Rights** – informal name of the **Servicemen's Readjustment Act** of 1944; also known simply as the **GI Bill**. This legislation provided a range

of benefits to returning WWII veterans — commonly referred to as GIs — who had been on active duty during the war years for at least 90 days and had not been dishonorably discharged; combat was not required. Through the Veterans Administration, the bill provided grants for school and college tuition as well as living expenses, vocational education, low-interest mortgages and small business loans, job training, hiring privileges, and unemployment compensation. Amendments to the act provided for full disability coverage and the construction of additional VA hospitals. Later legislation extended the benefits to all who had served in the armed forces. A large number of sociologists suggest that the GI Bill contributed in a big way to the emergence of a vibrant middle class in the United States.

**Senate Select Committee for Intelligence (SSCI)** – one of the two congressional intelligence oversight committees for all US intelligence activities.

446 Ibid.

447 Ibid.

**National Intelligence Council (NIC)** – best known as the organization that produces National Intelligence Estimates, which are intelligence community-wide forecasts of issues and challenges facing the security of the United States. The NIC, as the Intelligence Community's center for long-term strategic analysis, reports to the Director of National Intelligence in his capacity as head of the Intelligence Community. It is one of four organizations that assist the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) in fulfilling his obligations to the US intelligence community.

448 Ibid.

**October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate** – this notoriously exaggerated rendition of Iraq's stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), entitled "Iraq's Continuing Programs for Weapons of Mass Destruction," is what the neoconservatives in the American administration of George W. Bush used to justify the invasion, occupation, and dismemberment of Iraq on behalf of Zionist Israel and Anglo-Wahhābī Arabia. The text of portions of the document appear below; italicized pieces were secretly redacted by the CIA from the text it published on October 4, a week before Congress voted on a resolution to declare war on Iraq (October 10–11, 2002):

#### **Key Judgments**

*We judge that Iraq has continued its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs in defiance of UN resolutions and restrictions. Bagh-*

dad has chemical and biological weapons as well as missiles with ranges in excess of UN restrictions; if left unchecked, it probably will have a nuclear weapon during this decade. (*See INR alternative view at the end of these Key Judgments.*)

We judge that we are seeing only a portion of Iraq's WMD efforts, owing to Baghdad's vigorous denial and deception efforts. Revelations after the Gulf war starkly demonstrate the extensive efforts undertaken by Iraq to deny information. *We lack specific information on many key aspects of Iraq's WMD programs.*

Since inspections ended in 1998, Iraq has maintained its chemical weapons effort, energized its missile program, and invested more heavily in biological weapons; in the view of most agencies, Baghdad is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program.

- Iraq's growing ability to sell oil illicitly increases Baghdad's capabilities to finance WMD programs; annual earnings in cash and goods have more than quadrupled, *from \$580 million in 1998 to about \$3 billion this year.*
- Iraq has largely rebuilt missile and biological weapons facilities damaged during Operation Desert Fox and has expanded its chemical and biological infrastructure under the cover of civilian production.
- Baghdad has exceeded UN range limits of 150 km with its ballistic missiles and is working with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), which allow for a more lethal means to deliver biological and, less likely, chemical warfare agents.
- Although we assess that Saddam does not yet have nuclear weapons or sufficient material to make any, he remains intent on acquiring them. *Most agencies assess that Baghdad started reconstituting its nuclear program about the time that UNSCOM inspectors departed — December 1998.*

How quickly Iraq will obtain its first nuclear weapon depends on when it acquires sufficient weapons-grade fissile material.

- If Baghdad acquires sufficient fissile material from abroad it could make a nuclear weapon within several months to a year.
- Without such material from abroad, Iraq probably would not be able to make a weapon until 2007 to 2009, *owing to inexperience in building and operating centrifuge facilities to produce highly enriched uranium and challenges in procuring the necessary equipment and expertise.*
  - Most agencies believe that Saddam's personal interest in and Iraq's aggressive attempts to obtain high-strength aluminum tubes for centrifuge rotors — as well as Iraq's attempts to acquire magnets, high-speed balancing machines, and machine tools — provide compelling evidence that Saddam is reconstituting a uranium enrichment effort for Baghdad's nuclear weapons program. (*DOE*

*agrees that reconstitution of the nuclear program is underway but assesses that the tubes probably are not part of the program.)*

- Iraq's efforts to re-establish and enhance its cadre of weapons personnel as well as activities at several suspect nuclear sites further indicate that reconstitution is underway.
- All agencies agree that about 25,000 centrifuges based on tubes of the size Iraq is trying to acquire would be capable of producing approx. two weapons' worth of highly enriched uranium per year.
- *In a much less lively scenario, Baghdad could make enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon by 2005 to 2007 if it obtains suitable centrifuge tubes this year and has all the other materials and technological expertise necessary to build production-scale uranium enrichment facilities.*

*We assess that Baghdad has begun renewed production of mustard, sarin, GF (cyclosarin), and VX; its capability probably is more limited now than it was at the time of the Gulf war, although VX production and agent storage life probably have been improved.*

- *An array of clandestine reporting reveals that Baghdad has procured covertly the types and quantities of chemicals and equipment sufficient to allow limited CW agent production hidden within Iraq's legitimate chemical industry.*
- *Although we have little specific information on Iraq's CW stockpile, Saddam probably has stocked at least 100 metric tons (MT) and possibly as much as 500 MT of CW agents — much of it added in the last year.*
- *The Iraqis have experience in manufacturing CW bombs, artillery rockets, and projectiles. We assess that they possess CW bulk fills for SRBM warheads, including for a limited number of covertly stored Scuds, possibly a few with extended ranges.*

*We judge that all key aspects — R&D, production, and weaponization — of Iraq's offensive BW program are active and that most elements are larger and more advanced than they were before the Gulf war.*

- *We judge Iraq has some lethal and incapacitating BW agents and is capable of quickly producing and weaponizing a variety of such agents, including anthrax, for delivery by bombs, missiles, aerial sprayers, and covert operatives.*
  - *Chances are even that smallpox is part of Iraq's offensive BW program.*
  - *Baghdad probably has developed genetically engineered BW agents.*
- *Baghdad has established a large-scale, redundant, and concealed BW agent production capability.*
  - *Baghdad has mobile facilities for producing bacterial and toxin BW agents; these facilities can evade detection and are highly survivable. Within three to six months, these units probably could produce an amount of agent equal to the total that Iraq produced in the years prior to the Gulf war.*



Iraq maintains a small missile force and several development programs, including for a UAV probably intended to deliver biological warfare agent.

- Gaps in Iraqi accounting to UNSCOM suggest that Saddam retains a covert force of up to a few dozen Scud-variant SRBMs with ranges of 650 to 900 km.
- Iraq is deploying its new al-Samoud and Ababil-100 SRBMs, which are capable of flying beyond the UN-authorized 150-km range limit; *Iraq has tested an al-Samoud variant beyond 150 km — perhaps as far as 300 km.*
- Baghdad's UAVs could threaten Iraq's neighbors, US forces in the Persian Gulf, and if brought close to, or into, the United States, the US Homeland.
  - *An Iraqi UAV procurement network attempted to procure commercially available route planning software and an associated topographic database that would be able to support targeting of the United States, according to analysis of special intelligence.*
  - *The Director, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance, US Air Force, does not agree that Iraq is developing UAVs primarily intended to be delivery platforms for chemical and biological warfare (CBW) agents. The small size of Iraq's new UAV strongly suggests a primary role of reconnaissance, although CBW delivery is an inherent capability.*
- Iraq is developing medium-range ballistic missile capabilities, largely through foreign assistance in building specialized facilities, including a test stand for engines more powerful than those in its current missile force.

[All the rest below was “silently redacted” — that is, there was no evidence of a redaction]

*We have low confidence in our ability to assess when Saddam would use WMD.*

- *Saddam could decide to use chemical and biological warfare (CBW) preemptively against US forces, friends, and allies in the region in an attempt to disrupt US war preparations and undermine the political will of the Coalition. {p.4au}*
- *Saddam might use CBW after an initial advance into Iraqi territory, but early use of WMD could foreclose diplomatic options for stalling the US advance.*
- *He probably would use CBW when he perceived he irretrievably had lost control of the military and security situation, but we are unlikely to know when Saddam reaches that point.*
- *We judge that Saddam would be more likely to use chemical weapons than biological weapons on the battlefield.*
- *Saddam historically has maintained tight control over the use of WMD;*

however, he probably has provided contingency instructions to his commanders to use CBW in specific circumstances.

Baghdad for now appears to be drawing a line short of conducting terrorist attacks with conventional or CBW against the United States, fearing that exposure of Iraqi involvement would provide Washington a stronger cause for making war.

Iraq probably would attempt clandestine attacks against the US Homeland if Baghdad feared an attack that threatened the survival of the regime were imminent or unavoidable, or possibly for revenge. Such attacks — more likely with biological than chemical agents — probably would be carried out by special forces or intelligence operatives.

- The Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS) probably has been, directed to conduct clandestine attacks against US and Allied interests in the Middle East in the event the United States takes action against Iraq. The IIS probably would be the primary means by which Iraq would attempt to conduct any CBW attacks on the US Homeland, although we have no specific intelligence information that Saddam's regime has directed attacks against US territory.

Saddam, if sufficiently desperate, might decide that only an organization such as al-Qaeda — with worldwide reach and extensive terrorist infrastructure, and already engaged in a life-or-death struggle against the United States — could perpetrate the type of terrorist attack that he would hope to conduct.

- In such circumstances, he might decide that the extreme step of assisting the Islamist terrorists in conducting a CBW attack against the United States would be his last chance to exact vengeance by taking a large number of victims with him.

### **State/INR Alternative View of Iraq's Nuclear Program**

The Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research (INR) believes that Saddam continues to want nuclear weapons and that available evidence indicates that Baghdad is pursuing at least a limited effort to maintain and acquire nuclear weapon-related capabilities. The activities we have detected do not, however, add up to a compelling case that Iraq is currently pursuing what INR would consider to be an integrated and comprehensive approach to acquire nuclear weapons. Iraq may be doing so, but INR considers the available evidence inadequate to support such a judgment. Lacking persuasive evidence that Baghdad has launched a coherent effort to reconstitute its nuclear weapons program, INR is unwilling to speculate that such an effort began soon after the departure of UN inspectors or to project a timeline for the completion of activities it does not now see happening. As a result, INR is unable to predict when Iraq could acquire a nuclear device or weapon.

In INR's view Iraq's efforts to acquire aluminum tubes is central to the argument that Baghdad is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program, but

INR is not persuaded that the tubes in question are intended for use as centrifuge rotors. INR accepts the judgment of technical experts at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) who have concluded that the tubes Iraq seeks to acquire are poorly suited for use in gas centrifuges to be used for uranium enrichment and finds unpersuasive the arguments advanced by others to make the case that they are intended for that purpose. INR considers it far more likely that the tubes are intended for another purpose, most likely the production of artillery rockets. The very large quantities being sought, the way the tubes were tested by the Iraqis, and the atypical lack of attention to operational security in the procurement efforts are among the factors, in addition to the DOE assessment, that lead INR to conclude that the tubes are not intended for use in Iraq's nuclear weapon program.

### **Confidence Levels for Selected Key Judgments in This Estimate**

#### **High Confidence:**

- Iraq is continuing, and in some areas expanding its chemical, biological, nuclear and missile programs contrary to UN resolutions.
- We are not detecting portions of these weapons programs.
- Iraq possesses proscribed chemical and biological weapons and missiles.
- Iraq could make a nuclear weapon in months to a year once it acquires sufficient weapons-grade fissile material.

#### **Moderate Confidence:**

- Iraq does not yet have a nuclear weapon or sufficient material to make one but is likely to have a weapon by 2007 to 2009. (See INR alternative view, page 84).

#### **Low Confidence:**

- When Saddam would use weapons of mass destruction.
- Whether Saddam would engage in clandestine attacks against the United States Homeland.
- Whether in desperation Saddam would share chemical or biological weapons with al-Qa'ida [sic].

#### **Uranium Acquisition** [from p. 24 of the NIE]

Iraq retains approximately two-and-a-half tons of 2.5 percent enriched uranium oxide, which the IAEA permits. This low-enriched material could be used as feed material to produce enough HEU for about two nuclear weapons. The use of enriched feed material also would reduce the initial number of centrifuges that Baghdad would need by about half. Iraq could divert this material — the IAEA inspects it only once a year — and enrich it to weapons grade before a subsequent inspection discovered it was missing. The IAEA last inspected this material in late January 2002.

*Iraq has about 550 metric tons of yellowcake [a refined form of natural uranium] and low-enriched uranium at Tuwaitha, which is inspected annually by the IAEA. Iraq also began vigorously trying to procure uranium ore and yellowcake; acquiring either would shorten the time Baghdad needs to produce nuclear weapons.*

- *A foreign government service reported that as of early 2001, Niger planned to send several tons of “pure uranium” (probably yellowcake) to Iraq. As of early 2001, Niger and Iraq reportedly were still working out arrangements for this deal, which could be for up to 500 tons of yellowcake. We do not know the status of this arrangement.*
- *Reports indicate Iraq also has sought uranium ore from Somalia and possibly the Democratic Republic of the Congo.*

*We cannot confirm whether Iraq succeeded in acquiring uranium ore and/or yellowcake from these sources. Reports suggest Iraq is shifting from domestic mining and milling of uranium to foreign acquisition. Iraq possesses significant phosphate deposits, from which uranium had been chemically extracted before Operation Desert Storm. Intelligence information on whether nuclear-related phosphate mining and/or processing has been reestablished is inconclusive, however.*

***Annex A: INR’s Alternative View of Iraq’s Attempts to Acquire Aluminum Tubes*** [excerpt from p. 84 of NIE]

*Some of the specialized but dual-use items being sought are, by all indications, bound for Iraq’s missile program. Other cases are ambiguous, such as that of a planned magnet-production line whose suitability for centrifuge operations remains unknown. Some efforts involve non-controlled industrial material and equipment — including a variety of machine tools — and are troubling because they would help establish the infrastructure for a renewed nuclear program. But such efforts (which began well before the inspectors departed) are not clearly linked to a nuclear end-use. Finally, the claims of Iraqi pursuit of natural uranium in Africa are, in INR’s assessment, highly dubious (source: <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/jksonc/docs/nie-iraq-wmd.html>).*

Some professional views of the October 2002 NIE, from inside the establishment intelligence community of the US (source: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/darkside/themes/nie.html>):

[When] I took the job [leading the Iraq Survey Group], I had the opportunity to see the classified estimate... The difference between the classified and the unclassified version is practically trivial. And there’s no substance. So that’s when I started to get worried because

I realized that very little was known that I hadn't known in 1998; that there wasn't a lot new there that you could dig in[to].

I think it was a poor job, probably the worst of the modern NIEs, partly explained by the pressure, but more importantly explained by the lack of information they had. And it was trying to drive towards a policy conclusion where the information just simply didn't support it.

– **David Kay**

*Iraq Weapons Inspector, 1991–92; Iraq Survey Group, 2003–04*

...[The NIE] was so weak that if you go back now to all of the key judgments — and I saw this estimate in a classified form as well as an unclassified form — every key judgment was wrong...

The unfortunate thing about that estimate was that from 1998 on, the intelligence really doesn't change in that we don't pick up any new intelligence. So if you look at CIA statements about Iraq and weapons of mass destruction before 1998, they're carefully written; there are caveats; there are gray areas. They recognize various subtleties in the argument. They know that you can't be sure about a lot of this.

[From] 1998 on, they lose the best intelligence collection they have; that is, the CIA had infiltrated the United Nations inspection team. There were CIA operational people on the UN inspection team. When the UN team leaves and then tries to get back in and Saddam says, "No, you left. You're not getting back in," the CIA basically lost its collection capabilities against weapons of mass destruction and against Saddam Hussein.

So their information becomes weaker and there's less of it, yet they become more certain, after October of 2002, [of the existence of WMDs], which leads Hans Blix to make that wonderful remark that I'll never forget, that he's never seen a situation in which a government could have 100 percent certainty of weapons of mass destruction and zero percent knowledge of where they are. And that's exactly what happened. And if you look at the key judgments of the national intelligence estimate — all of this certainty, and all of the knowledge is wrong.

– **Melvin Goodman**

*CIA, 1966–1986*

I thought it was really a lot of nonsense. You could look at these various bits and pieces of things and see that it only made sense in the light of this enormous overweening fear which had possessed the country, that you could believe some of this crap.

The thing about the aluminum tubes — it says in the NIE, in fact, that the Department of Energy and the INR [Bureau of Intelligence Research at the State Department], said that it doesn't look like these are the right thickness at all.

Then there was the weird thing about the remotely piloted aircraft: they were going to fly off freighters and bomb the United States with biological weapons stuff. The Air Force — in the same NIE — took a footnote ...and they said that these things didn't seem suitable at all for that kind of thing.

So there were a lot of indicators in there, and if you knew everything you knew about Iraq and how badly we had put down their WMD programs in the aftermath of the first Gulf War, the whole thing just looked like nonsense, just absolute rubbish.

...It was just a silly document in many ways, and it was part of the marketing of this thing. It wasn't an NIE in the sense that I understood it.

– *W. Patrick Lang*  
DIA, 1985–1994

449 Ibid.

**George W. Bush** – see **Endnote 129** in Volume 3.

**Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)** – the civilian intelligence agency of the US government; established by the National Security Act of 1947 and expanded by the Central Intelligence Act of 1949. It is responsible for (1) the processing, analysis and dissemination of intelligence information collected through its own operations, either overtly or clandestinely; (2) covert-action operation targeted against foreign governments as directed or approved by higher authority; (3) executive-action operations as directed or approved by higher authority; (4) security of its own operations (operational security), personnel, systems, documents and installations; (5) liaison with other domestic and foreign intelligence and security agencies, and (6) counterintelligence and counterespionage operations outside the continental and non-contiguous United States. Also, jointly with the other members of the US intelligence community, it prepares national intelligence estimates (NIEs) based on all-source intelligence information, and it performs such other functions as may be directed by higher authority.



450 Ibid.

**National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA)** – provides timely, relevant, and accurate geospatial intelligence in support of national security objectives. Information collected and processed by NGA is tailored for customer-specific solutions. By giving customers ready access to geospatial intelligence, NGA provides support to civilian and military leaders and contributes to the state of readiness of US military forces. Fielding support teams worldwide, NGA also contributes to humanitarian efforts such as tracking floods and fires, and in peacekeeping.



451 Ibid.

**Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)** – US Department of Defense (DoD) combined military intelligence agency, established in 1961. Although it has offices in the Pentagon, the DIA's main location is in a special building constructed for it in southeast Washington, DC, at Bolling Air Force Base. In addition to the usual bureaucratic elements, including its own inspector general, it has a number of operating divisions that have been streamlined over the years since its founding. The DIA serves the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), with one DIA unit functioning as the JCS Support, a second as Resources, and a third as Operations, Plans, and Training. An important operational division of the DIA is Attachés and Operations (DA), which supervises the defense attaché system worldwide. In every American embassy, there are three military and naval attachés, one from each of the military departments. The senior attaché among the equally ranking attachés is the one who first chronologically attained the rank of colonel or naval captain, and is designated the *defense attaché*; he or she usually uses both titles, such as "Defense and Air Attaché." It may be noted that many foreign countries have also adopted the same system of defense cum military attaché.



The defense attaché is a member of the embassy country team. Depending on the size of the embassy, the importance of the host country, and the expertise required, in addition to the three principal attachés, there may be one or more assistant attachés from each of the three military departments. The Office of Attachés and Operations is divided into five operating divisions: (1) East Asia-Pacific; (2) East-Central Europe; (3) Latin America; (4) Near East and Africa; and (5) West Europe-NATO. In those host countries

where there is no Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), the defense attaché also serves as the host country contact point for foreign military sales (FMS) managed by the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA).

Other DIA divisions include Collection Management; Command Support and Plans; Foreign Intelligence; Imagery Exploitation; Estimates; Research; Scientific and Technical Intelligence; External Relations; and Information Systems. In addition, there are the Defense Intelligence Officers, located in the Pentagon, with six geographical and two functional offices; a Scientific Advisory Committee; and the Defense Intelligence College located at Bolling Air Force Base. The Defense Language Institute (DLI), previously the Army Language School and originally the Military Intelligence Service Language School, is not administered by the DIA, but many of its members have attended it to acquire foreign language skills. Unlike the National Security Agency (NSA), whose director has command control over the military SIGINT elements assigned to it by the military departments, the DIA has no such control over the departmental intelligence agencies, but it can and does impose intelligence requirements on them.

452 Ibid.

**security clearance** – a status granted to individuals allowing them to have access to classified information. According to the US State Department, eligibility for access to classified information is granted only to those for whom an appropriate personnel security background investigation has been completed. It must be determined that the individual's personal and professional history indicates loyalty to the United States, strength of character, trustworthiness, honesty, reliability, discretion, and sound judgment, as well as freedom from conflicting allegiances and potential for coercion, and a willingness and ability to abide by regulations governing the use, handling, and protection of classified information. A determination of eligibility for access to such information is a discretionary security decision based on judgments by appropriately trained adjudicative personnel. Eligibility will be granted only where facts and circumstances indicate access to classified information is clearly consistent with the national security interests of the United States. Access to classified information will be terminated when an individual no longer has need for access or is deemed to violate the responsibility of allegiance to the United States (source: <http://www.state.gov/m/ds/clearances/c10978.htm>).

In the US, security clearances are generally granted for a particular level of information; below are details of security levels from lowest to highest:

1. **Controlled Unclassified Information** – not a classification level, but a marker for information that cannot be distributed.
2. **For Official Use Only (FOUO)** – not a classification level, but a



marker for information that must be protected under the Privacy Act or other sensitive data.

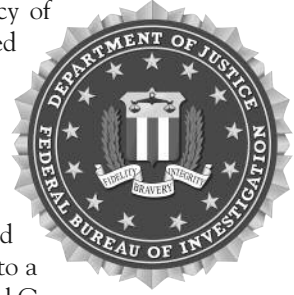
3. **Confidential** – also known as Public Trust; provides access to information that reasonably could be expected to cause damage to national security if disclosed to unauthorized sources; often given to military personnel. The background investigation, which requires National Agency Check with Local Agency Check and Credit Check (NACLIC) and goes back seven years, takes a few weeks to a few months. The clearance must be renewed every 15 years.
4. **Secret** – also known as Collateral Secret or Ordinary Secret; provides access to information that could reasonably be expected to cause serious damage to national security if disclosed to unauthorized sources. The background investigation, which requires an NACLIC and goes back seven years, takes a few months to a year. The clearance must be renewed every 10 years.
5. **Top Secret (TS)** – provides access to national security, counterterrorism, counterintelligence, or other highly sensitive data that could cause exceptionally grave damage to national security if disclosed to unauthorized sources. The background investigation, which requires a Single Scope Background Investigation (SSBI) and goes back 10 years, takes 3–18 months. The clearance must be renewed every 5 years.

Many US federal agencies use customized clearance levels such as:

1. **L clearance** – civilian access to nuclear materials and information (US Department of Energy, Nuclear Regulatory Commission).
2. **Q clearance** – access specifically relating to atomic or nuclear-related materials for non-military personnel (Department of Energy, Nuclear Regulatory Commission).
3. **Bureau of Immigration (BI) clearance** – used by US Customs and Border Protection (CBP).
4. **National Agency Check with Inquiries (NACI)** – used by the US Department of Justice.
5. **Yankee White** – administrative nickname for a background check for personnel working with the president.
6. **Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI)** – many agencies append this to Top Secret clearances for a combination known as TS/SCI. Information access is assigned in “compartments” for a short or extended time so that a person with access to one compartment has no access to others. Compartmented access could include cryptography, overhead reconnaissance, communications intelligence or nuclear stockpile information. Specific SCIs are known as “riders” when appended to clearances. The US Department of Defense (DoD) uses both SCI and a similar concept, Special Access Programs (SAP), for exception-

ally vulnerable information. SAP access could include information such as stealth technology. Both SCI and SAP designations require an SSBI investigation plus a special adjudication process (source: <http://govwin.com/knowledge/types-security-clearances/89580>).

**Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** – agency of the Office of the US Attorney General established in 1924 in a reorganization of the Bureau of Intelligence. It became responsible for domestic investigations of federal crimes (such as treason and sedition); special personnel security investigations; and counterintelligence, counterespionage, and countersubversion investigations and oversight within the US. The FBI is organized into a number of divisions, a Public Affairs Office, a Legal Counsel Office, and the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia. Its divisions include Records Management, Laboratory, Training, Inspection, Technical Services (all under an Executive Assistant Director for Law Enforcement Services), Criminal Investigations, and Intelligence (both under an Executive Assistant Director for Investigations). In recent years, particularly after 9/11, the FBI has branched out into areas considered to be traditionally CIA turf.



453 Ibid.

**National Security Agency (NSA)** – agency responsible for all communications intelligence (COMINT), radar intelligence, electronic intelligence, foreign instrumentation signals intelligence, radiation intelligence, telemetry intelligence, laser intelligence, and non-imagery infrared intelligence, which together comprise signals intelligence (SIGINT). The NSA was created not by a statute, as popularly supposed, but by an executive order of the Harry S Truman administration after the National Security Act of 1947. It acts as an all-source agency with the exception of human intelligence (HUMINT), acoustic intelligence, nuclear intelligence, and photographic intelligence (now imagery intelligence); and it has structured the COMINT area into compartmented COMINT, with “need-to-know” clearance granting access to each of the COMINT areas.



Its field installations are operated by the communications intelligence (COMINT) and security (COMSEC) commands or agencies of the three military services. In this connection, its director is the only head of a defense

agency that has been given command authority over the personnel of the three military components. It is also responsible for codes, ciphers, cryptography, cryptanalysis, encoding and decoding machines, one-time pads, secret inks, etc. The former US Army component (Army Security Agency) operated the two domestic intercept stations, Vint Hill Farms and the now-defunct Two-Rock Ranch for the parent NSA. Currently, its military components are the (US Army) Intelligence and Security Command, US Naval Security Group, and the (US Air Force) Electronic Security Command.

454 Ibid.

455 Ibid.

**USS Cole bombing** – refers to the bombing attack on the US Navy guided-missile destroyer USS Cole on October 12, 2000, while it was harbored and being refueled in the Yemeni port of Aden, and in which 17 US servicemen were killed and 39 were injured. Even though al-Qaeda allegedly claimed responsibility for the attack, a US judge assigned liability to the government of Sudan, and \$13 million of its frozen assets in the US were used to compensate the relatives of the victims. Adding to the mystery of who exactly conducted the attack, subsequent investigations and information obtained therefrom, sometimes after extended periods of torture, separately blamed at least four individuals to be the mastermind of the attack.

**US embassy bombings** – refers to the truck bombing of two US embassies in the East African countries of Kenya (Nairobi) and Tanzania (Dar es Salaam) on August 7, 1998. The date of the explosions — in which 224 people, including 12 Americans, were killed and some 5,000 wounded — corresponded to the eight-year anniversary of the arrival of US troops in the Arabian Peninsula, ostensibly to reverse Saddam Hussein's occupation of Kuwait in the Second Gulf War. Al-Qaeda and local members of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad were blamed for the bombings, and as a result, Osama bin Laden was added to the FBI's ten most-wanted fugitives list. US President Bill Clinton responded by bombing a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan with 13 cruise missiles, killing scores of innocents and laying waste to a site that manufactured 50% of the country's medications; and by launching 70 cruise missiles into Afghanistan with the stated aim of targeting terrorist training facilities, but with the same result of indiscriminately killing innocent Muslims who had nothing to do with the explosions.

Four men were convicted on May 29, 2001, for their alleged roles in the bombing of the two American embassies: Muḥammad Rāshid Dāwūd al-'Awhalī, Khalfān Khamīs Muḥammad al-Na'imī, Wadī' al-Ḥāj, and Muḥammad Ṣādiq 'Awdāḥ. The latter two, despite receiving life sentences,

never admitted to being involved in any terrorist attacks. It is not known whether the “confession” of the former two was extracted under torture.

456 Ibid.

**Michael F. Scheuer** (born 1952) – author of the book *Imperial Hubris* (2004), in which he made the claim that Osama bin Laden and his ilk were not terrorists interested simply in nonselective acts of murder against innocents in the West, but rational geopolitical and geostrategic actors who are resisting the imperial expansion of the American empire. Currently an adjunct professor at Georgetown University’s Center for Peace and Security Studies, he gained his experience as an intelligence officer for the CIA, where he spent 22 years. He was the head of the Counter Terrorism Center’s Bin Laden Issue Station from 1996–1999, and then served as special advisor to the head of the unit from 2001–2004. In 2009, he was dismissed as a fellow of the Jamestown Foundation because he wrote that the US’ special relationship with Israel undermined US national security and foreign policy objectives in the Muslim East.



**Osama bin Laden** (1957–2011?) – refer to **Endnote 148** in Volume 4. In a suspicious and clandestine operation code-named Operation Neptune Spear, US Navy SEALs from the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) reputedly killed bin Laden in Abbottabad, Pakistan in May, 2011. After the raid, his body was apparently taken to Afghanistan for identification and then “buried at sea” within 24 hours of his murder. Bin Laden was never formally indicted by the FBI for the 9/11 attacks because of lack of evidence, according to the agency’s own admission. If the killed individual was indeed bin Laden, official leaks of the details of the raid suggest that the compound could have easily been subdued and the much sought-after fugitive captured alive and brought to trial for the crimes he was accused of committing. However, it is obvious from how the whole affair was handled that the US government did not want this individual to talk in any kind of open forum. None of the official explanations surrounding bin Laden’s alleged final days can be believed because the suspect in question was never allowed to defend himself against his accusers.



**Cold War** (1947–1991) – refer to **Endnote 289** in Volume 5.

457 Waseem Shehzad, ‘Pakistan’s Dream Remains Unfulfilled’, *Crescent International* 42(1) (March 2013), pp. 9–12.

- 458 Trevor Aaronson, *The Terror Factory: Inside the FBI's Manufactured War on Terrorism*. (New York, New York: Ig Publishing, 2013), pp. 16, 45.
- 459 Sam Harris, 'Mired in a Religious War' — *Fundamentalism is the Threat*. (Washington, DC: The Washington Times, Opinion section, December 2, 2004).  
<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2004/dec/1/20041201-090801-2582r/>
- 460 Ibid.
- 461 Ibid.
- 462 Ibid.
- 463 Ibid.
- 464 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zīlāl al-Qur'ān, Volume 2*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Shurūq, 1405AH), 11th ed., p. 736.
- 465 Ibid.
- 466 Ibid.
- 467 **Indonesian government declaration against Shi'īs:**  
 Farah Mirza Bukhari, Faisal Bodi, *UJN Mission to Indonesia: Investigating Claims of Sectarianism*. (Wembley, United Kingdom: Islamic Human Rights Commission, 2013).  
<http://www.ihrc.org.uk/attachments/article/10783/Investigating%20Claims%20of%20Sectarianism.pdf>

**Hazaras murdered in Pakistan:**

Crescent-online.net staff writers, *Pakistan's Descent into Sectarian Chaos*. (Toronto, Canada: Crescent International website, January 12, 2013).  
<http://www.crescent-online.net/2013/01/pakistans-descent-into-sectarian-chaos-crescent-onlinenet-3570-articles.html>

**Sipah-e Sahaba Pakistan** – a Pakistani Deobandi organization established as a political party in the early-1980s by Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, with the aim of curtailing the expansion of Shi'ī political and doctrinary influence in the wake of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Since its inception, membership in the organization has been banned several times by Pakistani governments, both military and civilian. According to some reports, after its banning for

the second time in 1993, the organization's principals renamed it Lashkar-e Jhangvi; others say that in 1996, elements within the organization who did not deem it militant enough broke away and formed the paramilitary outfit known as Lashkar-e Jhangvi. Today, both organizations are considered to be one and the same. The most recent bans took place in 2002 (by President Pervez Musharraf), when it was declared a terrorist organization; and in 2012 (by President Asif Ali Zardari), when it adopted the current name it goes by, Ahl-e Sunnat Wal Jamaat (Deoband).

### Saudi emptying prisons of rapists and murderers:

Below is an image of the original memorandum in Arabic, issued by a director in the Interior Ministry of Saudi Arabia, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Alī al-Rumayzān, followed by a translation; (source: [http://www.sott.net/article/256787-Saudi-Arabia-sent-death-row-inmates-to-fight-in-Syria-in-lieu-of-execution?utm\\_source=twitterfeed&utm\\_medium=twitter](http://www.sott.net/article/256787-Saudi-Arabia-sent-death-row-inmates-to-fight-in-Syria-in-lieu-of-execution?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter)):

رقم: ١٤٦٦/ب/ج  
المرفقات:  
التاريخ: ١٤٣٣/٥/٢٥ هـ



المملكة العربية السعودية  
وزارة الداخلية  
المتابعة

( سري جداً )

المكرم سعادة اللواء / سعود الثنيان  
المكتب السري بوزارة الداخلية  
سلمه الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

إشارة لبرقية الديوان الملكي رقم ١١٢ وتاريخ ١٦/٤/١٤٣٣ هـ والمشار فيها  
للموقوفين في سجون المملكة المتهمين بجرائم يطبق فيها حكم الشريعة  
الإسلامية بقتلهم تعزيراً بالسيف لتكمكم بالتواصل مع متهمين تم إدانتهم  
بتهرب المخدرات والقتل والاختصاب من الجنسيات الآتية: ١٥٥ يعني  
٢١ فلسطيني / ٢١٢ سعودي / ٩٦ سوداني / ٢٥٤ سوري / ٨٢ أردني  
٦٨ صومالي / ٣٢ أفغاني / ١٩٤ مصري / ٢٠٣ باكستاني / ٢٣ عراقي  
٤٤ كويتي .

تم الاتفاق معهم على إعفائهم من إقامة الحد الشرعي عليهم وصرف معاشات  
شهرية لعائلاتهم وذويهم الذين سيتم منحهم من السفر خارج السعودية مقابل  
تأجيل المتهمين وتدريبهم من أجل إرسالهم إلى الجهاد في سورية .  
وتنمشلوا بقبول تحيياتي

عبد الله بن علي الرميضان  
مدير المتابعة بوزارة الداخلية

• نسخة لفضيلة رئيس هيئة الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر  
• نسخة لمستشفيات ندمية

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
 Ministry of the Interior  
 Follow-up

Number: H/J/1/1466  
 Attachments:  
 Date: 25/5/1433AH

(Top Secret)

The Honorable Gracious General Sa'ūd al-Thunayyān,  
 Blessed by God  
 The Clandestine Office, the Interior Ministry

May the peace and blessings of God be yours.

In reference to the Royal Court's fax number 112 dated 19/4/1433AH pertaining to the detainees held in the Kingdom's prisons, who are accused of crimes punishable by death in accordance with the Islamic Shari'ah — execution method: the sword — we report to you that we have been in contact with these defendants. They stand guilty of drug smuggling, murder, and rape. Their nationalities are as follows: 105 Yemenis, 21 Palestinians, 212 Saudis, 96 Sudanese, 254 Syrians, 82 Jordanians, 68 Somalis, 32 Afghans, 194 Egyptians, 203 Pakistanis, 23 Iraqis, and 44 Kuwaitis.

We reached an agreement with them to have the due *shar'ī* punishment waived, along with a stipend to be paid to their families and next of kin who will be banned from leaving Saudi territory in exchange for the detainees' agreement to prepare, train, and become qualified to be sent for jihad in Syria.

Kindly accept my greetings,  
 The Managing Facilitator of  
 the Ministry of the Interior  
 'Abdullāh ibn 'Alī al-Rumayzān

- a copy to his eminence the Chairman of the Committee to Enforce the Ma'rūf and Disallow the Munkar
- a copy to General Intelligence

**Iraq war sectarian casualties:**

Gilbert Burnham, Shannon Doocy, Elizabeth Dzeng, Riyadh Lafta, Les Roberts, *The Human Cost of the War in Iraq: A Mortality Study, 2002–2006*. (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, 2006).

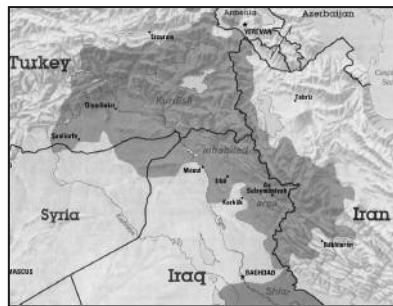
<http://usiraq.procon.org/sourcefiles/HumanCostofWar.pdf>

Dr. Neta C. Crawford, *Civilian Death and Injury in the Iraq War, 2003–2013*. (Providence, Rhode Island: Costs of War website, 2013).  
[http://costsofwar.org/sites/default/files/articles/15/attachments/Iraq\\_civ2013.pdf](http://costsofwar.org/sites/default/files/articles/15/attachments/Iraq_civ2013.pdf)

**Yāsir al-Ḥabīb** (1979–present) – a Shī’ī “scholar” who established the Khoddam al-Mahdi Foundation while still in Kuwait; for his views pertaining to Abū Bakr, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, and Umm al-Mu’minīn ‘Ā’ishah, whom he accuses of poisoning and murdering the Prophet (ﷺ), he was sentenced to 10 years’ imprisonment in Kuwait. Before starting his sentence, he fled the country and ultimately ended up in the United Kingdom where he has been sheltered since 2004. Serving the strategic aims of his sponsors, he has missed few opportunities to advance the agenda of the enemies of the Muslims by inciting sectarian tensions. It was because of his provocative statements and lectures that the *rahbar* of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Seyyed Ali Khamenei, issued a fatwa forbidding anyone to insult the Prophet’s (ﷺ) wives and companions. Al-Ḥabīb considers the Iranian government to be oppressive because, in part, it prevents people from visiting the tomb of Abū Lu’lu’ah al-Nahāwandī — said to be located in Kashan, Iran — who assassinated ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.



468 **Kurdish people** – a Western Asian ethnicity that inhabits a contiguous region located in basically four countries: Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Said by demographers to be in the range of approximately 30 million, the Kurds form 19% of the population of Turkey, 23% of Iraq, 10% of Iran, and 8% of Syria; nearly half of all Kurds reside in Turkey. There is also a worldwide diaspora of around two million with the largest numbers living in Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, and Lebanon. The vast majority of them are Sunnī Muslims of the Shāfi’ī school of thought; however, also among them are small numbers of Shī’īs, ‘Alawīs, Zoroastrians, and Jews (200,000 Kurdish Jews live in Israel).



Because they have their own language and a unique culture, and because they have suffered mistreatment and disenfranchisement at the hands of secular governments (for instance, between 1986 and 1989, Saddam Hussein’s government laid waste to over 2,000 Kurdish villages and killed over 182,000 civilians), they have been particularly susceptible in



their history to join nationalist movements for an independent Kurdistan. Over this history, a significant number of these separatist and secessionist movements have taken on a paramilitary character, with the most organized one today being the Marxist leaning Kurdistan Workers Party or the PKK. The PKK and the Turkish government were substantially engaged in an open war from 1984 to 1999. Having more of a nationalist (exclusivist) than an ideological character, the PKK has not hesitated to opportunistically form alliances with the US, the Soviet Union, Israel, and anyone else who would financially and militarily support its cause for independence.

#### **Ethnic war in North Africa (Mali):**

Zainab Cheema, 'Violence in Mali and the spread of AFRICOM', *Crescent International* 41(12) (February 2013), pp. 9–11.

469 **Mu'tazilah (Mu'tazilites)** – an Islamic trend of the second and third Islamic *hijri* centuries, known for the intellect and reasoning capacity of its adherents. Their adversaries accuse them of being influenced by Greek thought and philosophy. Their orientation and reasoning may be summed up as:

1. *tawhīd* (Allah's ﷻ singular authority and divinity),
2. *'adl* (justice),
3. *al-manzilah bayna al-manzilatayn* (a position midway between *īmān* and *kufr*),
4. *al-wa'd wa-al-wa'id* (reward and punishment), and
5. *al-amr bi-al-ma'rūf wa-al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (the legalization of the self-evident good and the delegitimization of the self-evident evil).

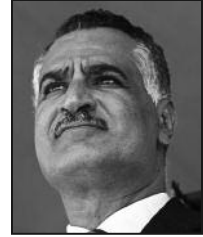
Though the trend did not initially start out as a political party, its political involvement ultimately culminated in a clash with the Abbasid dynasty pertaining to the issue of whether or not the Qur'an was created. In the polarized atmosphere created by the divisiveness of the issue, the Mu'tazilah, who maintained that the Qur'an was created, lost the battle to the Abbasids and from then onward the rational vitality of the Muslims went into decline.

470 **Muhammad ibn Sa'ūd** (died 1765) – main progenitor of the ruling dynasty of Saudi Arabia; also written as Muhammad ibn Saud. See **Endnotes 293** and **297** in Volume 7.

471 **Dār al-Taqrīb bayna al-Madhāhib al-Islāmīyah (The Institute for Reconciliation among the Islamic Schools of Thought)** – refers to the accumulation of efforts by well-known Islamic scholars beginning with Jamāl al-Dīn Asadābādī (al-Afghānī, 1839–1897), Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh (1849–1905), Shaykh Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (1865–1935) as well as others to establish an institute that would build on the commonalities between Sun-

nīs and Shī'īs. This institute was finally established in Cairo, Egypt in the late-1940s and early-1950s. Among its well-known founders there were Shaykh 'Abd al-Majīd Salīm (al-Azhar), Ayatullah Mohammad Taqī Qummi, Ayatullah Kashani, Shaykh Mahmūd Shaltūt (al-Azhar), and Grand Ayatullah Burujerdi. This commendable effort was terminated due to certain policies of the Egyptian government during the 1950s and 1960s.

- 472 **Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir** (1918–1970) – commonly transliterated as Gamal Abdel Nasser; Egyptian strongman from 1954 until his death in 1970, and president of the United Arab Republic (Egypt and Syria) from 1958–1961. He planned the coup that overthrew King Farūq in 1952, and then following a clash with the Muslim Brotherhood in 1954 — whose leaders he forcibly imprisoned and tortured, thereby setting a precedent for future unelected presidents — he put Egypt's first secular president, General Muḥammad Najīb, under house arrest, ultimately and officially assuming the presidency in 1956. His socialist (leftist) leanings along with his attempt to nationalize the Suez Canal in 1956 led to the British, French, and Israeli occupation of the Sinai Peninsula. However, in an aberrational standoff with the Eisenhower administration of the US, the three occupiers were forced to withdraw, thus skyrocketing the political fortunes of the previously anonymous Egyptian leader, particularly in the Arab world and more generally in the presumptively non-aligned Third World.



'Abd al-Nāṣir was the formidable executive force behind the rise of the Arab Nationalist movement and Pan-Arab dream of the late-1950s and the ensuing decade (the ideological component of the movement was provided by the Ba'th Party), which reached its high point in the creation of the ultimately unsuccessful United Arab Republic (UAR), a political union of Syria and Egypt. He was also one of the co-founders of the Non-Aligned Movement. With his ongoing persecution of the Ikhwān (Muslim Brotherhood), his main political and ideological rivals, his political career reached its nadir, not to mention the beginning of the end of the Arab National cause, with the execution of (al-Shahīd) Sayyid Quṭb in August, 1966. Less than a year later, he would lose the Six-Day War, and a few years thereafter, he would die of a heart attack. Refer also to Endnote 147 in Volume 3, Endnote 45 in Volume 4, and **Endnote 222d** in Volume 5.

**Six-Day War** (1967) – refer to Endnote 148 in Volume 3; Endnote 222d in Volume 5; and **Endnotes 294, 362, and 379** in Volume 7.

- 473 **Majma' al-Taqrīb bayna al-Madhāhib al-Islāmīyah** (**The International Forum for the Proximity among the Islamic Schools of Thought**) – refers

to the resuscitation of the work of Dār al-Taqrīb, which had gone dormant in Cairo a few decades earlier. Beginning in the Islamic Republic of Iran around the year 1408AH (1985), it set out to build on the ambition of Dār al-Taqrīb. Its founding members are Ayatullah Va'ez Zadeh Khorasani (Iran), Ayatullah Muhammad 'Alī al-Taskhiri (Iran), the late Dr. Kalim Siddiqui (Pakistan/UK), the late Shaykh Sa'id Sha'bān (Lebanon), the late Ayatullah Muḥammad Ḥusayn Faḍl-allāh (Lebanon), the late Ayatullah Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ḥakīm (Iraq), Shaykh 'Abd al-Hadi Awang (Malaysia), Imam Muḥammad al-Āṣī (USA/Syria-Lebanon). At the time of publication for this volume (1435AH/2014CE), the Majma' had been convened each year for the past 27 years. In addition to many articles, publications, and multimedia presentations, the Majma' has reprinted Dār al-Taqrīb's seminal reference, *Risālah al-Islām (The Message of Islam)*, a 15-volume work.

474 **Khawārij (Kharijites)** – an Islamic political party that emerged when Imam 'Alī accepted the arbitration (*taḥkīm*) with King Mu'āwiyah in the aftermath of the Battle of Ṣiffin (37AH/657CE). Known for the statement, “*La ḥukma illā li-Allāh*: There is no governance except Allah's,” they expressed outright hostility to Imam 'Alī, despite the fact that he had refused to engage them in battle until they turned violent and terroristic. Ultimately, at the Battle of al-Nahrawān, the Imam had to militarily take on the Khawārij, who were roundly defeated. The few of them who survived (less than ten) plotted to kill three personalities, whom they had accused of being *kāfirs*: Imam 'Alī, Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān, and 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ. They succeeded only in assassinating Imam 'Alī. After committing the crime of the century, they began a type of guerrilla warfare against the Umayyad dynasty, focusing most of their activities on the Arabian Peninsula and southern Iraq. Because the Khawārij were never really able to consolidate their position, divergent parties materialized in their ranks — such as al-Azāriqah, al-Najdah, al-'Ajāridah, al-Tha'alibah, and al-Ibaḍiyah. Outlasting all the rest of the factions, the Ibaḍiyah live nowadays in Oman, Zanzibar, and North Africa.

475 Narrated by Abū Hurayrah and recorded by al-Tirmidhī.

المسلم أخو المسلم لا يحوته ولا يكذبه ولا يخذله. كل المسلم على المسلم حرامٌ عرضه وماله ودمه. التَّقْوَى هَا هُنَا (وأشار إلى القلب) بحسب امرئٍ من الشَّيْءِ أَنْ يَحْتَقِرَ أَخَاهُ الْمُسْلِمَ.

476 Jo Becker, Scott Shane, *Secret 'Kill List' Proves a Test of Obama's Principles and Will*. (New York, New York: New York Times, News (A) section, May 29, 2012), p. A1.  
([http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/29/world/obamas-leadership-in-war-on-al-qaeda.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/29/world/obamas-leadership-in-war-on-al-qaeda.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0))

477 Rabbi Yitzchak Shapira and Rabbi Yosef Elitzur, *Torat HaMelech (The King's Torah)*. (Yitzhar, Israel: Od Yosef Chai yeshiva, 2010).  
<http://torathamelech.blogspot.com/p/chapter-one.html>

478 Narrated by Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī and recorded in the *sunan* of Imams al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

إِنَّ فِي الْجَنَّةِ مَنَّةً دَرَجَةٌ أَعَدَّهَا اللَّهُ لِلْمُجَاهِدِينَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ. مَا بَيْنَ كُلِّ دَرَجَتَيْنِ كَمَا بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ.

479 Narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd and recorded by al-A'mash.

قال النبي: من رمى بسهم فله أجره درجة. فقال رجل: يا رسول الله وما الدرجة؟ فقال (النبي): أما إنها ليست بعتبة أمك. ما بين الدرجتين مئة عام.

With reference to the distance between heaven and earth and with our contemporary scientific discoveries, we may factor in *light years* — the distance traveled through empty space in one tropical year by any electromagnetic radiation (about 6 million miles). This unit of measurement is widely used in literature of all types, but not normally used by astronomers, who prefer the unit *parsec*.

480 **conscientious objection** – the term originally denoted parents who objected to compulsory vaccination of their children in the West.

481 Narrated by Abū Hurayrah and recorded by Abū Dāwūd.

من مات ولم يَغزُ ولم يَحُدِّثْ نَفْسَهُ بِغَزْوِ مَاتَ عَلَى شُعْبَةٍ مِنَ النِّفَاقِ.

482 Narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr and recorded by Imam al-Bukhārī.

قال رجلٌ للنبيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم: أجاهد؟ قال: لك أبوان. قال: نعم. قال: ففيهما فجاهد.

483 David Crystal (editor), *The Cambridge Encyclopedia, 2nd Edition*. (New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 884.

484 Ibid., p. 822.

485 **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** – commonly known as the UN Refugee Agency; established in Geneva, Switzerland in 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly, the agency is mandated to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. It strives to ensure that every-

one can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another country, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally, or resettle in a third country. Today, a staff of more than 7,600 people in over 125 countries provides assistance for tens of millions of people, mostly in the so-called Third World, and more particularly in majority Muslim countries. UNHCR has had difficulty in upholding its mandate primarily because of the restrictive and exclusivist asylum policies of the wealthy nations and because most of its funding comes in the form of donations from these same wealthy countries.

- 486 **Huguenots** – French Calvinist Protestants whose political rivalry with Catholics led to the French Wars of Religion (1562–1598). Their leader, Henry of Navarre, succeeded to the throne (1589), granting them important concessions on his conversion to Catholicism; these were later revoked by Louis XIV (1685), resulting in persecution and emigration.

**Edict of Nantes** (1598) – issued by Henry IV of France, the document granted Protestants civil status in a primarily Catholic nation. No longer permitting the Catholic majority to view the Protestants as heretics, the edict elevated civil unity over religious homogeneity, thus opening the door for secularism to become dominant in state structures and official attitudes. In addition to guaranteeing freedom of conscience for all individuals in society, the edict offered amnesty, the reinstatement of civil rights, including the right to work in any field or for the state, and the right to bring any grievance directly to the king as concessions to the Protestants. The edict was revoked by the grandson of Henry IV, King Louis XIV, in 1685, leading to the persecution and eventual exodus of many Protestants.

- 487 **Bolshevik Revolution** – refer to **Endnotes 348** and **390** in Volume 7.

**Bosnia-Herzegovina** – Republika Srpska (Serbian Republic) is one of two autonomous political entities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the other being the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These were the boundaries that were “agreed to” at the Dayton Accords (December, 1995) after the ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims confined their surviving demographics to the center of the territory shown in the map.



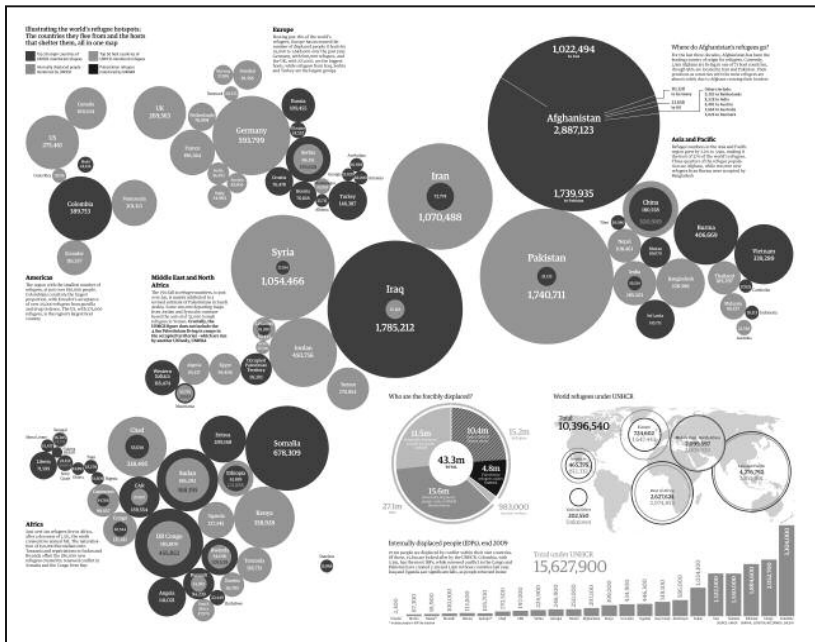
Where these boundaries should be is what escalated into the Bosnian War, which became a theater for the mass murder of Muslims from 1992–1995, because the US and the European powers prevented foreign Muslim fighters from assisting their Bosnian Muslim brothers and would not lift the arms

embargo on the Muslim forces, leading to the type of imbalance that culminated in the mass slaughter. Refer also to p. 303 and **Endnote 183** in Volume 2; pp. 155–157 and Endnote 125 in Volume 3; and pp. 57, 189, 193 and Endnote 90 in Volume 6.

488 **Second Gulf War (1990–1991)** – refer to **Endnote 60** in Volume 2.

489 Stephen P. Elliott, Martha Goldstein, Michael Upshall (editors), *Webster's New World Encyclopedia, College Edition*. (New York, New York: Prentice Hall, 1992), p. 886.

490 **UNHCR Refugee Statistics (2010)**



Simon Rogers (webpage publisher), *UNHCR refugee statistics 2010*. (San Francisco, California: Scribd website, 2010).  
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/33026764/UNHCR-refugee-statistics-2010>

### Conflict in Syria:

Tahir Mustafa, 'The Anglo-Wahhabi-Zionist war on Syria goes into high gear', *Crescent International* 41(6) (August 2012), pp. 9–11.

Zafar Bangash, 'Confusion among Muslims over the Syrian crisis', *Crescent International* 41(11) (January 2013), pp. 9–12.

Yusuf Dhia-Allah, 'Russia helps Obama save face on Syria', *Crescent International* 42(8) (October 2013), pp. 9–11.

#### **Conflict in Libya:**

Zafar Bangash, 'A new Western crusade: this time against Libya', *Crescent International* 40(2) (April 2011), pp. 9–11.

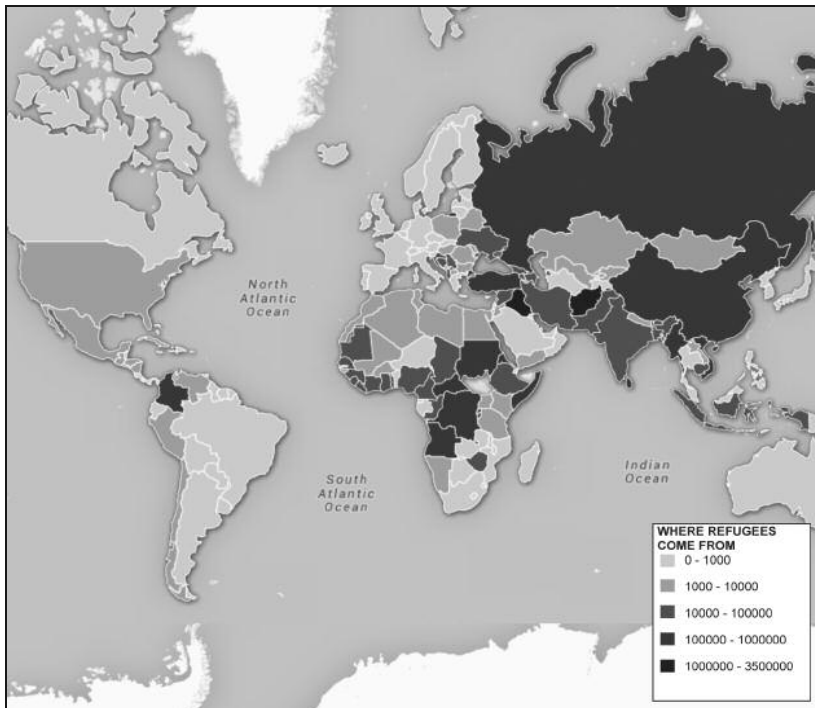
Zafar Bangash, 'Reasons behind the West's attack on Libya', *Crescent International* 40(5) (July 2011), pp. 9–11.

491 Simon Rogers, *UNHCR refugee statistics 2010*.

492 Ibid.

493 9/11 – refer to **Endnote 86** in Volume 2.

#### **494 Where Refugees Come From**



Simon Rogers, *Refugee statistics mapped*. (New York, New York: The Guardian US website, June 20, 2011).

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/interactive/2011/jun/20/refugee-statistics-mapped>

495 Simon Rogers, *UNHCR refugee statistics 2010*.

496 Narrated by ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and recorded by Ibn Taymiyah and others.

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى فَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَهَجْرَتُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى دُنْيَا بَصِيْبِهَا أَوْ امْرَأَةٍ يَنْكُحُهَا فَهَجْرَتُهُ إِلَى مَا هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِ.

497 **Zāhiri School of Islamic Law** – founded by Abū Sulaymān Dāwūd ibn ‘Alī ibn Khalaf al-Zāhiri in the 9th century CE, it flourished in al-Andalus (Islamic Spain), particularly under the leadership of the jurist Ibn Ḥazm. Even though it became extinct for all practical purposes by the 14th century, it is still recognized by the other major schools of thought (*madhhabs*). Among its distinctive features are that it declared the Qur’an, the Hadith, and consensus of the Ṣaḥābah as the only acceptable sources of authority for the purposes of *ijtihād*; it rejected the practice of *taqlīd* (imitation of scholarly authority); it based its legal principles on a literal (*ẓāhir*) understanding of the Qur’an and the Hadith, thereby shunning analogy (*qiyās*) and juristic preference (*istiḥsān*); and it emphasized the importance of applying the rules of grammar to the text in order to determine the revealed meaning. Most notably, it objected to the use of reason in favor of revelation.

498 Another narrative indicates that the thief was a Ṭu‘mah ibn Ubayriq.

499 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur’ān*, Volume 2, p. 751.

500 **scapegoat** – the term originated in the Hebrew ritual described in the Book of Leviticus, “Aaron shall lay both hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the Children of Israel, and all their transgressions, even all their sins; and he shall put them on the head of the goat” (Leviticus, 16:20–22). In other words, the sins of the people were symbolically transferred to the goat, which was then let go into the wilderness taking with it the guilt of the people.

At a different level, a schoolboy may be humiliated by a teacher at school; and as he cannot hit back at the teacher, he gets frustrated. So when he gets home, he might take out his frustration on his younger brother or sister, who is a more accessible target. Thus the younger brother or sister becomes the *scapegoat*.

501 **USA PATRIOT Act** (2001) – acronym for **U**niting and **S**trengthening **A**merica by **P**roviding **A**ppropriate **T**ools **R**equired to **I**ntercept and **O**bstruct **T**errorism Act, an act of the US Congress that was signed into law by then President George W. Bush on October 26, 2001. Because of the 9/11 and anthrax attacks of 2001, the act was rushed through congressional delib-



erations, placing much more power in the executive branch (that is, the president, his staff, and the military) while severely curtailing civil liberties. It authorized the indefinite detention of immigrants (who have not been charged with any crime); gave permission to law enforcement officers to search a home or business and seize property without the owner's or occupant's consent or knowledge; allowed the FBI to mine phone, email, and financial data (records) without a court order; and expanded the capacity of law enforcement agencies to conduct "fishing expeditions" into the private records of an un-accused (innocent) business or citizen. The nine titles of the act are as follows:

1. **Enhancing domestic security against terrorism** – authorized measures to enhance the ability of domestic security services to prevent terrorism;
2. **Surveillance procedures** – covered all aspects of the surveillance of suspected terrorists, those suspected of engaging in computer fraud or abuse, and agents of a foreign power who are engaged in clandestine activities. The most controversial title of the act, it expanded the scope and availability of wiretapping and surveillance orders as well as search warrants, allowing so-called "sneak-and-peek" warrants, roving wiretaps, and the FBI to gain access to documents that reveal the behavior patterns of US citizens;
3. **Anti-money-laundering to prevent terrorism** – intended to facilitate the prevention, detection and prosecution of international money laundering and the financing of terrorism;
4. **Border security** – gave more investigative and law enforcement power to the US Attorney General (head of the Justice Department) and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS);
5. **Removing obstacles to investigating terrorism** – basically allowed the Justice Department to pay large sums of money (bounties) to private contractors under the cover of combatting terrorism or preventing terrorist acts;
6. **Victims and families of victims of terrorism** – improved the speedy provision of aid to families of public safety officers by expedited payments to officers or the families of officers; also amended the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA) to provide compensation and assistance to victims of terrorism or mass violence;
7. **Increased information sharing for critical infrastructure protection** – made terrorism into a federal crime as opposed to just a local one;
8. **Terrorism criminal law** – expanded the meaning of *terrorism* to include acts of mass destruction, assassination, kidnapping, and certain acts of racketeering; created new penalties for attacks on the mass transportation system as well as biological attacks on a civilian population; and introduced a number of measures to prevent and penalize activities that are deemed to support terrorism;

9. **Improved Intelligence** – requires the US Attorney General to disclose intelligence collected through wiretaps and physical searches, as it may pertain to suspected terrorists, to the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) so as to streamline the gathering of foreign intelligence.

In 2011, US President Barack Obama signed into law the PATRIOT Sunsets Extensions Act of 2011, which gave a four-year extension to three key provisions of the original act: roving wiretaps, searches of business records without a court order, and conducting surveillance of individuals suspected of terrorism-related activities but not connected to known terrorist outfits (so-called *lone wolves*). Refer also to Endnote 129 in Volume 3.

502 **Geneva Conventions** (1949) – refer to **Endnotes 73, 93, and 94** in Volume 6.

503 The entire excellently written article is presented below so as to acquaint the reader with the necessary background of the case:

Five years ago this week, on December 13, 2001, the Indian parliament was in its winter session. The government was under attack for yet another corruption scandal. At 11:30 in the morning, five armed men in a white Ambassador car fitted out with an improvised explosive device drove through the gates of Parliament House. When they were challenged, they jumped out of the car and opened fire. In the gun battle that followed, all the attackers were killed. Eight security personnel and a gardener were killed too. The dead terrorists, the police said, had enough explosives to blow up the parliament building, and enough ammunition to take on a whole battalion of soldiers. Unlike most terrorists, these five left behind a thick trail of evidence — weapons, mobile phones, phone numbers, ID cards, photographs, packets of dried fruit and even a love letter.

Not surprisingly, prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee seized the opportunity to compare the assault to the September 11 attacks in the US only three months previously.

On December 14, 2001, the day after the attack on parliament, the Special Cell (anti-terrorist squad) of the Delhi police claimed it had tracked down several people suspected of being involved in the conspiracy. The next day, it announced that it had “cracked the case”: the attack, the police said, was a joint operation carried out by two Pakistan-based terrorist groups, Lashkar-e Taiba and Jaish-e Mohammad. Three Kashmiri men, Syed Abdul Rahman Geelani, Shaukat Hussain Guru and Mohammad Afzal [Guru], and Shaukat’s wife, Afsan Guru, were arrested.

...The police charge sheet was filed in a special fast-track trial court designated for cases under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Some three years later, the trial court sentenced Geelani, Shaukat and Afzal to death. Afsan Guru was sentenced to five years of "rigorous imprisonment." On appeal, the high court subsequently acquitted Geelani and Afsan, but upheld Shaukat's and Afzal's death sentence. Eventually, the supreme court upheld the acquittals and reduced Shaukat's punishment to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment. However, it not just confirmed, but enhanced Mohammad Afzal's sentence. He was given three life sentences and a double death sentence.

In its judgment on August 5, 2005, the supreme court admitted that the evidence against Afzal was only circumstantial, and that there was no evidence that he belonged to any terrorist group or organisation. But it went on to endorse what can only be described as lynch law. "The incident, which resulted in heavy casualties, had shaken the entire nation," it said, "and the collective conscience of the society will only be satisfied if capital punishment is awarded to the offender."

Spelling out the reasons for giving Afzal the death penalty, the judgment went on: "The appellant, who is a surrendered militant and who was bent upon repeating the acts of treason against the nation, is a menace to the society and his life should become extinct." This implies a dangerous ignorance of what it means to be a "surrendered militant" in Kashmir today.

So, should Afzal's life be extinguished? His story is fascinating because it is inextricably entwined with the story of the Kashmir Valley. It is a story that stretches far beyond the confines of courtrooms and the limited imagination of people who live in the secure heart of a self-declared "superpower." Afzal's story has its origins in a war zone whose laws are beyond the pale of the fine arguments and delicate sensibilities of normal jurisprudence.

For all these reasons it is critical that we consider carefully the strange, sad and utterly sinister story of the December 13 attack. It tells us a great deal about the way the world's largest "democracy" really works. It connects the biggest things to the smallest. It traces the pathways that connect what happens in the shadowy grottoes of our police stations to what goes on in the snowy streets of Paradise Valley, and from there to the malign furies that bring nations to the brink of nuclear war. It raises specific questions that deserve specific, and not ideological or rhetorical, answers. What hangs in the balance is far more than the fate of one man.

For the most part, the December 13 attack was an astonishingly incompetent “terrorist” strike. But consummate competence appeared to be the hallmark of everything that followed: the gathering of evidence, the speed of the investigation by the Special Cell, the arrest and charging of the accused and the three-and-a-half-year-long judicial process that began with the fast-track trial court.

The operative phrase in all of this is “appeared to be.” If you follow the story carefully, you will encounter two sets of masks. First, the mask of consummate competence (accused arrested, “case cracked” in two days flat), and then, when things began to come undone, the benign mask of shambling incompetence (shoddy evidence, procedural flaws, material contradictions). But underneath all of this — as several lawyers, academics and journalists who have studied the case in detail have shown — is something more sinister, more worrying. Over the past few years the worries have grown into a mountain of misgivings, impossible to ignore.

The doubts set in as early as the day after the parliament attack, when the police arrested Geelani, a young lecturer at Delhi University. His outraged colleagues and friends, certain that he had been framed, contacted the well-known lawyer Nandita Haksar and asked her to take on his case. This marked the beginning of a campaign for the fair trial of Geelani. It flew in the face of mass hysteria and corrosive propaganda that was enthusiastically disseminated by the mass media. But despite this, the campaign was successful, and Geelani was eventually acquitted, along with Afsan Guru.

Geelani’s acquittal blew a gaping hole in the prosecution’s version of the parliament attack. The linchpin of its conspiracy theory suddenly tuned out to be innocent. But in some odd way, in the public mind, the acquittal of two of the accused only confirmed the guilt of the other two. There was bloodlust that had to be satiated. When the government announced that Afzal, Accused No. 1 in the case, would be hanged on October 20, 2006, it seemed that most people welcomed the news not just with approval, but with morbid excitement. But then, once again, the questions resurfaced.

To see through the prosecution’s case against Geelani was relatively easy. He was plucked out of thin air and transplanted into the centre of the “conspiracy” as its kingpin. Afzal was different. He had been extruded through the sewage system of the hell that Kashmir has become. He surfaced through a manhole, covered in shit (and when he emerged, policemen in the Special Cell pissed on him — literally). The first thing they made him do was a “media confession” in which he implicated himself completely in the

attack. The speed with which this happened made many of us believe that he was indeed guilty as charged. It was only much later that the circumstances under which this "confession" was made were revealed, and even the supreme court was to set it aside, saying that the police had violated legal safeguards.

From the very beginning there was nothing pristine or simple about Afzal's case. His story gives us a glimpse into what life is really like in the Kashmir Valley. It is only in the Noddy Book version we read about in our newspapers that security forces battle militants and innocent Kashmiris are caught in the crossfire. In the adult version, Kashmir is a valley awash with militants, renegades, security forces, double-crossers, informers, spooks, blackmailers, blackmailers, extortionists, spies, both Indian and Pakistani intelligence agencies, human rights activists, NGOs and unimaginable amounts of unaccounted-for money and weapons. There are not always clear lines that demarcate the boundaries between all these things and people; it is not easy to tell who is working for whom.

Truth, in Kashmir, is probably more dangerous than anything else. The deeper you dig, the worse it gets. At the bottom of the pit are the Special Operations Group and Special Task Force (STF), the most ruthless, indisciplined and dreaded elements of the Indian security apparatus in Kashmir, which play a central role in the Afzal story. Unlike the more formal forces, they operate in a twilight zone where policemen, surrendered militants, renegades and common criminals do business. They prey upon the local population, particularly in rural Kashmir. Their primary victims are the thousands of young Kashmiri men who rose up in revolt in the anarchic uprising of the early 1990s and have since surrendered and are trying to live normal lives.

In 1989, when Afzal crossed the border to be trained as a militant, he was only 20. He returned with no training, disillusioned with his experience. He put down his gun and enrolled himself in Delhi University. In 1993, without ever having been a practising militant, he voluntarily surrendered to the Border Security Force. Illogically enough, it was at this point that his nightmares began. His surrender was treated as a crime and his life became hell. Afzal's story has enraged Kashmiris because what has happened to him could have happened, is happening and has happened to thousands of young Kashmiri men and their families. The only difference is that their stories are played out in the dingy bowels of interrogation centres, army camps and police stations where they have been burned, beaten, electrocuted, blackmailed and killed, their bodies thrown out of the backs of trucks for passers-by to find. Whereas

Afzal's story is being performed like a piece of medieval theatre on the national stage, in the clear light of day, with the legal sanction of a "fair trial," the hollow benefits of a "free press" and the all pomp and ceremony of a so-called democracy.

In documents submitted to the court, Afzal describes how, in the months before the attack on parliament, he was tortured in the camps of the STF — with electrodes on his genitals and chillies and petrol in his anus. He talks of how he was a constant victim of extortion. He mentions the name of Deputy Superintendent of Police Devinder Singh, who said he needed him to do a "small job" for him in Delhi. (Singh has subsequently admitted on record to having tortured Afzal in exactly the ways Afzal has described). Afzal has also said that from the time he was arrested up to the time he was charged (a few months), his younger brother Hilal was held in illegal confinement in a police camp in Kashmir. As ransom.

Even today, Afzal does not claim complete innocence. It is the nature of his involvement that is being contested. For instance, was he coerced, tortured and blackmailed into playing even the peripheral part he played? In a gross violation of his constitutional rights, from the time he was arrested and right through the crucial phase of the trial when the real work of building up a case is done, Afzal did not have a lawyer. He had nobody to put out his version of the story, or help him or anyone else sift through the tangle of lies and fabrications and propaganda put out by the police. Various individuals worked it out for themselves. Today, five years later, a group of lawyers, academics, journalists and writers has published a reader (December 13th: *The Strange Case of the Parliament Attack*, published by Penguin India). It is this body of work that has fractured what, only recently, appeared to be a national consensus interwoven with mass hysteria.

Through the fissures, those who have come under scrutiny — shadowy individuals, counter-intelligence and security agencies, political parties — are beginning to surface. They wave flags, hurl abuse, issue hot denials and cover their tracks with more and more untruths. Thus they reveal themselves.

The essays in the Penguin book raise questions about how Afzal, who never had proper legal representation, can be sentenced to death without having had an opportunity to be heard, without a fair trial. They raise questions about fabricated arrest memos, falsified seizure and recovery memos, procedural flaws, vital evidence that has been tampered with, false telephone records, false testimonies, legal lacunae, material contradictions in the testimonies of police and prosecution witnesses, and the out-

right lies that were presented in court and published in newspapers. They show how there is hardly a single piece of evidence that stands up to scrutiny.

And then there are even more disturbing questions that have been raised, which range beyond the fate of Afzal. Some of these are critical for a country that is claiming to be a responsible nuclear power. Here are 13 questions for December 13:

Question 1: For months before the attack on parliament, both the government and the police had been saying that parliament could be attacked. On December 12, 2001, the then prime minister, AB Vajpayee, warned of an imminent attack. On December 13, it happened. Given that there was an “improved security drill,” how did a car bomb packed with explosives enter the parliament complex?

Question 2: Within days of the attack, the Special Cell of the Delhi police said it was a meticulously planned joint operation of Jaish-e Mohammad and Lashkar-e Taiba. They said the attack was led by a man called “Mohammad” who was also involved in the hijacking of flight IC-814 in 1998. (This was later refuted by the Central Bureau of Investigation). None of this was ever proved in court. What evidence did the Special Cell have for its claim?

Question 3: The entire attack was recorded live on CCTV. Two Congress party MPs, Kapil Sibal and Najma Heptullah, demanded in parliament that the CCTV recording be shown to the members. They said that there was confusion about the details of the event. The chief whip of the Congress party, Priyaranjan Das-munshi, said, “I counted six men getting out of the car. But only five were killed. The closed circuit TV camera recording clearly showed the six men.” If Dasmunshi was right, why did the police say that there were only five people in the car? Who was the sixth person? Where is he now? Why was the CCTV recording not produced by the prosecution as evidence in the trial? Why was it not released for public viewing?

Question 4: Why was parliament adjourned after some of these questions were raised?

Question 5: A few days after December 13, the government declared that it had “incontrovertible evidence” of Pakistan’s involvement in the attack, and announced a massive mobilisation of almost half a million soldiers to the Indo-Pakistan border. The subcontinent was pushed to the brink of nuclear war. Apart from Afzal’s “confession,” extracted under torture (and later set aside by the supreme court), what was the “incontrovertible evidence”?

Question 6: Is it true that the military mobilisation to the Pakistan border had begun long before the December 13 attack?

Question 7: How much did this military standoff, which lasted for nearly a year, cost? How many soldiers died in the process? How many soldiers and civilians died because of mishandled landmines, and how many peasants lost their homes and land because trucks and tanks were rolling through their villages and landmines were being planted in their fields?

Question 8: In a criminal investigation, it is vital for the police to show how the evidence gathered at the scene of the attack led them to the accused. The police have not managed to show how they connected Geelani to the attack. And how did the police reach Afzal? The Special Cell says Geelani led them to Afzal. But the message to look out for Afzal was actually flashed to the Srinagar police before Geelani was arrested. So how did the Special Cell connect Afzal to the December 13 attack?

Question 9: The courts acknowledge that Afzal was a surrendered militant who was in regular contact with the security forces, particularly the STF of Jammu and Kashmir police. How do the security forces explain the fact that a person under their surveillance was able to conspire in a major militant operation?

Question 10: Is it plausible that organisations such as Lashkar-e Taiba or Jaish-e Mohammad would rely on a person who had been in and out of STF torture chambers, and was under constant police surveillance, as the principal link for a major operation?

Question 11: In his statement before the court, Afzal says that he was introduced to “Mohammed” and instructed to take him to Delhi by a man called Tariq, who was working with the STF. Tariq was named in the police charge sheet. Who is Tariq and where is he now?

Question 12: On December 19, 2001, six days after the parliament attack, police commissioner SM Shangari identified one of the attackers who was killed as Mohammad Yasin Fateh Mohammad (alias Abu Hamza) of the Lashkar-e Taiba, who had been arrested in Mumbai in November 2000 and immediately handed over to the Jammu and Kashmir police. He gave detailed descriptions to support his statement. If police commissioner Shangari is right, how did Yasin, a man in the custody of the Jammu and Kashmir police, end up participating in the parliament attack? If he was wrong, where is Yasin now?

Question 13: Why is it that we still do not know who the five “terrorists” killed in the parliament attack are?

These questions, examined cumulatively, point to something far more serious than incompetence. The words that come to mind are complicity, collusion, involvement. There is no need for us to



feign shock or shrink from thinking these thoughts and saying them out loud. Governments and their intelligence agencies have a hoary tradition of using strategies such as this to further their own ends. (Look up the burning of the Reichstag and the rise of Nazi power in Germany in 1933; or Operation Gladio, in which European intelligence agencies created acts of terrorism, especially in Italy, in order to discredit militant groups such as the Red Brigades).

The official response to all of these questions has been dead silence. As things stand, Afzal's execution has been postponed while the president considers his clemency petition. Meanwhile, the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (now in the opposition) announced that it would turn "Hang Afzal" into a national campaign. But it does not seem to have taken off. Now other avenues are being explored. The main strategy seems to be to create confusion and polarise the debate on communal lines. In the business of spreading confusion, the media, particularly television journalists, can be counted on to be perfect collaborators. On discussions, chat shows and "special reports," we have television anchors playing around with crucial facts, like young children in a sandpit. Torturers, estranged brothers, senior police officers and politicians are emerging from the woodwork and talking. The more they talk, the more interesting it all becomes.

One character who is rapidly emerging from the shadowy periphery and wading on to centre-stage is deputy superintendent Devinder Singh. He was showcased on the national news (CNN-IBN), in what was presented as a "sting" operation with a hidden camera. It all seemed a bit unnecessary, however, because Singh has been talking a lot these days. He has done recorded interviews, on the phone as well as face to face, saying exactly the same shocking things. Weeks before the sting operation, in a recorded interview with Parvaiz Bukhari, a freelance journalist, he said, "I did interrogate and torture him [Afzal] at my camp for several days. And we never recorded his arrest in the books anywhere. His description of torture at my camp is true. That was the procedure those days and we did pour petrol in his ass and gave him electric shocks. But I could not break him. He did not reveal anything to me despite our hardest possible interrogation... He looked like a *bhonda* [fool] those days, what you call a *chootya* [idiot] type. And I had a reputation for torture, interrogation and breaking suspects. If anybody came out of my interrogation clean, nobody would ever touch him again. He would be considered clean for good by the whole department."

This is not an empty boast. Singh has a formidable reputation for torture in the Kashmir Valley. On TV, his boasting spiralled into

policy-making. "Torture is the only deterrent for terrorism," he said. "I do it for the nation." He did not bother to explain why or how the "bhundu" that he tortured and subsequently released allegedly went on to become the diabolical mastermind of the parliament attack. Singh then said that Afzal was a Jaish militant. If this is true, why was the evidence not placed before the courts? And why on earth was Afzal released? Why was he not watched? There is a definite attempt to try to dismiss this as incompetence. But given everything we know now, it would take all of Singh's delicate professional skills to make some of us believe that.

The official version of the story of the parliament attack is very quickly coming apart at the seams. Even the supreme court judgment, with all its flaws of logic and leaps of faith, does not accuse Afzal of being the mastermind of the attack. So who was the mastermind? If Afzal is hanged, we may never know. But LK Advani, the leader of the opposition, wants him hanged at once. Even a day's delay, he says, is against the national interest. Why? What is the hurry? The man is locked up in a high-security cell on death row. He is not allowed out of his cell for even five minutes a day. What harm can he do? Talk? Write, perhaps? Surely, even in Advani's own narrow interpretation of the term, it is in the national interest not to hang Afzal? At least not until there is an inquiry that reveals what the real story is and who actually attacked parliament?

A genuine inquiry would have to mean far more than just a political witch-hunt. It would have to look into the part played by intelligence, counter-insurgency and security agencies as well. Offences such as the fabrication of evidence and the blatant violation of procedural norms have already become established in the courts, but they look very much like just the tip of the iceberg. We now have a police officer admitting — boasting — on record that he was involved in the illegal detention and torture of a fellow citizen. Is all of this acceptable to the people, the government and the courts of India?

Given the track record of Indian governments (past and present, right, left and centre) it is naive — perhaps utopian is a better word — to hope that today's politicians will ever have the courage to institute an inquiry that will, once and for all, uncover the real story. A maintenance dose of pusillanimity is probably encrypted in all governments. But hope has little to do with reason.

Arundhati Roy, *India's shame*. (London, UK: The Guardian, World News section, December 14, 2006).

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/dec/15/india.kashmir>

504 Tahir Mahmoud, 'India murders another Kashmiri by hanging', *Crescent International* 42(1) (March 2013), pp. 12–14.

505 **stereotype** – derived from the printers' term for a plate cast from a mold (originally from the Greek word *stereos* for *solid*), the term refers to a fixed mental impression. It is defined by some as "an exaggerated belief associated with a category; its function is to justify (rationalize) our conduct in relation to that category." This definition implies a discrepancy between an objectively ascertainable reality and a subjective perception of that reality.

506 Ellis Cashmore (editor), *Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations, Fourth Edition*. (New York, New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 354–56.

507 Ibid.

508 Ibid.

509 **prejudice** – from the Latin prefix *prae-* (in advance), coming before *judicium* (judgment); it may be defined as learned beliefs and values that lead an individual or group of individuals to be biased for or against members of particular other groups prior to actual experience of those groups.

510 Ellis Cashmore, *Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations*, pp. 288–90.

511 **Theodor Adorno** (1903–1969) – social philosopher and musicologist, born in Frankfurt, Germany. He was a member of the movement known as the Frankfurt School, and became director of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research. His philosophy is most fully presented in *Negative Dialectics* (1966) and (with Horkheimer) *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947). He also wrote widely, and more accessibly, on music, mass culture, and art.



Theodor W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality (Studies in Prejudice)*. (New York, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1993).

512 Ellis Cashmore, *Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations*, pp. 288–90.

513 Ibid.

514 Ibid.

515 Ibid.

516 Ibid.

517 Glenn A. Fine (Inspector General, US Department of Justice), *The September 11 Detainees: A Review of the Treatment of Aliens Held on Immigration Charges in Connection with the Investigation of the September 11 Attacks*. (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General, April, 2003).  
<http://www.justice.gov/oig/special/0306/full.pdf>

518 **Abraham Lincoln** (1809–1865) – 16th president of the United States (1861–1865); a Republican. In the American Civil War, his chief concern was the preservation of the Union from which the Confederate (Southern) slave states had seceded on his election. In 1863, he announced the freedom of the slaves with the Emancipation Proclamation. He was reelected in 1864 with victory for the North in sight, but was assassinated at the end of the war.



Born in a log cabin in Kentucky, Lincoln was self-educated. He practiced law from 1837 in Springfield, Illinois and then became a member of the state legislature (1832–1842), where he was known as Honest Abe. He joined the new Republican Party in 1856, and was elected president in 1860 on a minority vote. His refusal to concede to Confederate demands for the evacuation of the federal garrison at Fort Sumter, Charleston, South Carolina precipitated the first hostilities of the US Civil War. In the Gettysburg Address (1863), he declared the aims of preserving a “...nation conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” Reelected with a large majority in 1864 on a National Union ticket, he advocated a reconciliatory policy toward the South “with malice toward none, with charity for all.” Five days after the surrender of General Lee, the Confederate military commander, Lincoln was shot in a theater by an actor and Confederate sympathizer, John Wilkes Booth.

**habeas corpus** – a writ (a form of written command in the name of a court or other legal authority to act, or abstain from acting, in some way) requiring a person who detains another to appear in court and justify that detention. If there is no good reason for the detention, release is ordered. The writ can be obtained whether the detainee is held by the state or privately. In England and Wales it is issued by the Divisional Court of the Queens Bench Division or by a High Court judge. In Scotland, the term is not used; however, a petition to the High Court of Justiciary can achieve the same

result. Article 1, Section 9 of the US Constitution guarantees “The Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it,” and is used to challenge governmental restraint contrary to fundamental or constitutional law.

**Franklin Delano Roosevelt** (1882–1945) – often referred to by his initials: FDR; US statesman and 32nd president (1933–1945) of the United States. Born in Hyde Park, New York, he studied at Harvard University, and then became a lawyer (1907), a New York State senator (1910–1913), assistant secretary of the Navy (1913–1920), Democratic candidate for the vice-presidency in 1920, and ultimately governor of New York (1928–1932), even though he was stricken with paralysis (polio) in 1921. As president he met the economic crisis with his New Deal for national recovery (1933), a program of government intervention in industry and business, to overcome the Great Depression, including public works on a vast scale, farm subsidies, and legislation to liberalize and control relations between capital and labor. In 1933, he recognized and exchanged diplomatic missions with the USSR and thus ended US “isolationism.” From 1941 he found, in the Lease-Lend Act, means to give massive support to Britain against the Nazis in WWII, while officially maintaining US neutrality. Most court historians say he strove in vain to ward off war; nonetheless, he modified America’s neutrality to favor the Allies, and was brought into WWII by Japan’s invasion of Pearl Harbor (1941). He met with Churchill and Stalin at Tehran (1943) and Yalta (1945), but died at Warm Springs, Georgia, where he had gone for treatment, three weeks before the German surrender. FDR became the only US president to be reelected three times (1936, 1940, and 1944), with his fourth term commencing shortly before his death.



519 **classified information** – official information that has been determined to require, in the interests of state security, protection against unauthorized disclosure and which has been so designated. In Islamic terms, this means information or material that is owned by, produced for, or being in the possession of or under the control of the highest ranking trustees of the Ummah, and that has been determined by proper authority to require protection against unauthorized disclosure in the interest of the Ummah and is so designated.

520 **George Washington** (1732–1799) – first American president and leader of the American colonists during the War of Independence against Britain. He served in the British army against France in the Canadian War (1755–1759), but was afterwards converted to the idea of US independence, becoming one

of its leading advocates. His principal military feat during the War of Independence was his march, with American and French forces, from the Hudson River to Yorktown, where he forced Lord Cornwallis, the British commander, to surrender (1781). The Federal Convention of 1787 at Philadelphia, having adopted the Constitution, elected Washington president of the US. He assumed office in 1789 and remained the president until 1797.



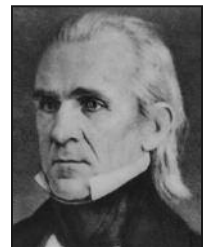
**James Monroe** (1758–1831) – fifth president of the United States, who was President Thomas Jefferson’s envoy extraordinaire in 1803, when he negotiated the Louisiana Purchase from France, but failed to acquire the Floridas from Spain. In 1816, he was elected president of the United States and was reelected almost unanimously four years later. The Floridas were eventually purchased in 1819, and the Missouri Compromise (1820) peacefully settled the first slavery conflict under the constitution. Monroe will always be associated in American history with the doctrine bearing his name (the Monroe Doctrine), which rejected European interference in the affairs of North and South America, and remained the basis of American foreign policy for over a century.



**Andrew Jackson** (1767–1845) – first Democratic president of the United States. A veteran of the American War of Independence, Jackson was elected a senator in 1797, but a difference with Thomas Jefferson led to his temporary retirement from political life. He became a national hero when, in 1815, he drove off a British attack on New Orleans. In 1818, he led a force that occupied Florida, later becoming its first governor (1821–1823). He was elected seventh president of the United States in 1828 and was reelected in 1832 with a landslide victory as the nominee of the newly-styled Democratic Party.

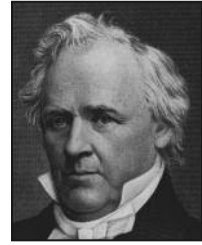


**James Knox Polk** (1795–1849) – US statesman and 11th US president (1845–1849); born in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Admitted to the bar in 1820, he entered the US Congress as a Democrat (1825), and became governor of Tennessee (1839). During his presidency, Texas was annexed to the USA (1845), and after the Mexican War (1846–1847), the USA occupied California and New Mexico. The Oregon boundary was settled by a

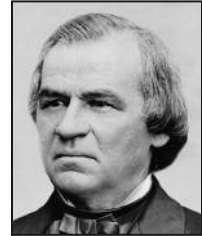


compromise with England. He also condemned anti-slavery agitation, and was committed to states' rights, a revenue tariff, and an independent treasury.

**James Buchanan** (1791–1868) – US statesman and 15th US president (1857–1861); born in Stony Batter, Pennsylvania. He studied at Dickinson College, was admitted to the bar (1812), then became a senator (1834), secretary of state (1845), and Democratic president (1857). During his administration the slavery question came to a head. He supported the establishment of Kansas as a slave state, but his compromise failed to avert the US Civil War. He retired from politics in 1861.



**Andrew Johnson** (1808–1875) – US statesman and 17th US president (1865–1869); born in Raleigh, North Carolina. With little formal schooling, he became alderman and mayor in Greenville, Tennessee, and a member of the state legislature (1835), state senate (1841), and later the US Congress (1843). He was governor of Tennessee in 1853, and a US senator in 1857. During the US Civil War he was made military governor of Tennessee (1862), and vice president (1865). On Lincoln's assassination (1865), he became president. A Democrat, his conciliatory policies were opposed by the US Congress, which wished to keep the Southern states under military governance. He vetoed the congressional measures, was impeached as a result, brought to trial, and finally acquitted.



**James Abram Garfield** (1831–1881) – twentieth American president (1881), who was assassinated after only four months in office. A self-made man, he was strongly antagonistic toward slavery. During the Republican search for a presidential candidate in 1880, in which 28 ballots had been held without success, the need for a compromise candidate was acknowledged, and Garfield, known to be a hard worker and fine speaker, was declared the party's candidate on the 36th ballot. In office he was regarded to be tactless, and his support of civil service reform antagonized both his opponents and a powerful faction within his own party. He gave preferential treatment to members of the radical wing of the Republican Party, and was shot and mortally wounded by a disappointed office-seeker.

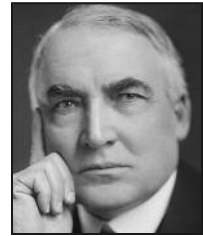


**William Howard Taft** (1857–1930) – US statesman and 27th US president (1909–1913); born in Cincinnati, Ohio. He studied at Yale University,

became a lawyer, solicitor general (1890), the first civil governor of the Philippine Islands (1901), and Secretary of War (1904–1908). As president he secured an agreement with Canada that ensured relatively free trade. After finishing his term as president (1913), he was professor of law at Yale, and from 1921, chief justice of the US Supreme Court. His son Robert Alphonso Taft (1889–1953), became a US senator (1938) and Republican leader (1939–1953), but was defeated in his attempt to become a presidential candidate on three occasions.



**Warren Gamaliel Harding** (1865–1923) – newspaper publisher who became the 29th US president (1921–1923), dying while still in office; responsible for America’s “isolationism” between the WWI and WWII. As a Republican senator, Harding opposed, through the League of Nations, President Woodrow Wilson’s attempts to give the US an international role. Chosen by a lobby of influential businessmen as a pliable candidate for the presidency, Harding was elected in 1920 on a “return to normalcy” ticket. His administration was chiefly remarkable for political dishonesty on a vast scale and the jailing of Secretary of the Interior Albert B. Fall for corruption; Harry M. Daugherty, the Attorney General, was also implicated. Responsibility for the loss of prestige to the office of president rested as much on the Republican Party and the nation as on Harding, whose mediocre talents were ill-suited for the top office.



**Harry S Truman** (1884–1972) – became the 33rd US president after the death, in office, of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1945). He authorized the use of the first atomic weapon (bomb) against a civilian population in Japan (Hiroshima and Nagasaki, August 6 and 9, 1945), not necessarily to end WWII, as Japan’s surrender was only a few days away, but to send a message to Joseph Stalin to prevent him from expanding the USSR’s territories. In 1947, he proclaimed the “Truman Doctrine” of assistance to countries threatened by communist expansion in the immediate postwar years; some \$400 million was allocated to preempt the proliferation of communism into Greece and Turkey. In 1948, he sanctioned the Marshall Plan to aid postwar European recovery, an offer that extended to Eastern as well as Western Europe. Under his Four Point program of 1949, US economic, scientific, and technical aid was “given” to underdeveloped counties. In 1948, he was reelected president, running against Republican candidate Thomas Dewey, in





a result that confounded all predictions. At the start of his second term, his first major policy initiative was the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949. In the following year he authorized US intervention in Korea and nominated General MacArthur as commander-in-chief of UN Forces. In the office of this Masonic president the US recognized the State of Israel, a mere 11 minutes after the thieves of the Holy Land declared independence. Over the objections of Secretary of Defense James Forrestal and Secretary of State George Marshall, both of whom feared recognition would damage US relations with the Arabs, Truman indicated he would "... decide his policy on the basis of justice [!], not oil." Ultimately, at a time in which he was widely expected to lose the election, he made his decision on the consideration that there were few Arabs in his constituents, and on the advice of a longtime Jewish (Zionist) business partner, Edward Jacobson.

**Gerald Rudolf Ford** (1913–2006) – following President Richard Nixon's resignation in the wake of the Watergate scandal, he became the 38th president of the US (1974–1977). He declined the vice presidential nomination in 1968, but following the resignation of Vice President Spiro Agnew, he became vice president in December, 1973. Ford graduated from Yale Law School in 1941, saw wartime service in the US Navy, and won nomination to the US House of Representatives in 1949, becoming Republican minority leader in 1965. A "moderate Republican," he strove hard for the establishment of better relations between the US and the People's Republic of China. He was defeated by Democrat Jimmy Carter in the presidential election of 1976.



**Theodore Roosevelt** (1858–1919) – an advocate of American exceptionalism, he became the 26th US president (1901–1909). He became a national hero as the leader of "Roosevelt's Rough Riders" in the Spanish-American War (1898), and president on William McKinley's assassination in 1901; in 1905, he was elected for a second term. He campaigned against big business and began to enforce antitrust laws, though his supporters were disappointed that he did not do more. In foreign affairs, his "dollar diplomacy" claimed the right of the US, through its commercial interests, to intervene in Latin America. Though his mediation after the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) won him the Nobel Peace Prize, his militaristic and threatening foreign policy betrayed his essentially pugnacious, jingoistic conception of America's role in the world, which was demonstrated when he fomented rebellion in Colombia (1903) to facilitate the building of the Panama Canal.



521 **John Hancock** (1737–1793) – US politician and a leader of the American Revolution. As president of the US Continental Congress (1775–1777), he was the first to sign the US Declaration of Independence (1776). Because he signed it in a large, bold hand (in popular belief, so that it would be big enough for George III to see), his name became a colloquial term for a signature in the US. He coveted command of the Continental Army, deeply resenting the selection of George Washington. He was also the governor of Massachusetts (1780–1785; 1787–1793).



**Benjamin Franklin** (1706–1790) – US statesman, author, and scientist; born in Boston, Massachusetts. He set up a printing house in Philadelphia, bought the *Pennsylvania Gazette* (1729), and built a reputation as a journalist. In 1736, he became clerk of the Assembly; in 1737, postmaster of Philadelphia; and in 1754, deputy postmaster-general for the colonies. He was also sent on various diplomatic missions to England. In 1746, he began his research into electricity, proving that lightening and electricity are identical, and suggesting that buildings be protected by lightning conductors. In 1776, he was actively involved in framing the US Declaration of Independence. A skilled negotiator, he successfully won Britain’s recognition of US independence (1783). He was US minister in Paris until 1785, and three times president of the Pennsylvania Executive Council. After taking part in the Federal Constitutional Convention (1787), he retired from public life, and wrote an acclaimed autobiography.



**Paul Revere** (1735–1818) – a Boston silversmith and an American revolutionary who carried the news of the approach of British troops to Lexington and Concord on the night of April 18, 1775. On the next morning, the first shots of the American Revolution were fired at Lexington. Longfellow’s poem, “The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere,” commemorates the event. Revere, who took part in the Boston Tea Party, was a courier for the Continental Congress, often riding from Boston to Philadelphia. In early-1775, he alerted rebels in New Hampshire that the British were transporting supplies from Fort William and Mary. The New Hampshire militiamen captured quantities of munitions that proved decisive at the Battle of Bunker Hill. Revere was active throughout the American Revolution and printed the first continental money.



**Sam Houston** (1793–1863) – US general who wrested Texas from Mexico (1863); president of the Republic of Texas (1836–1845). Houston, Texas, is named after him. Houston was governor of the State of Tennessee and later US senator from and governor of the State of Texas. He took Indian “citizenship” when he married a Cherokee woman.

**Davy Crockett** (1786–1836) – US folk hero, born in Tennessee; a Democratic congressman (1827–1831; 1833–1835). A series of books, of which he may have been part-author, made him into a mythical hero of the frontier, but his Whig associations cost him his office. He died in the Battle of the Alamo during the war between the US and Mexico over Texas. He clashed with Andrew Jackson, claiming Jackson had betrayed his frontier constituency, and left for Texas in bitterness.

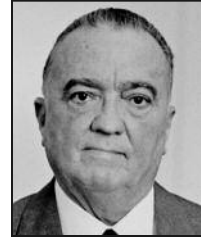


**James “Jim” Bowie** (1796–1836) – US frontiers man and folk hero. A colonel in the Texas forces during the Mexican War, he is said to have invented the single-edge, guarded hunting and throwing knife known as a Bowie Knife. He was killed in the Battle of the Alamo.

**Douglas MacArthur** (1880–1964) – US general in WWII; commander of US forces in the Far East; and, from March of 1942, commander of the Allied forces in the southwest Pacific. After the Japanese surrender, he commanded the Allied occupation forces there. During 1950, he commanded the UN forces in Korea, but in April of 1951, after expressing views contrary to US and UN policy, he was relieved of all his commands by President Truman, another Freemason. Born in Little Rock, Arkansas, the son of an army officer, MacArthur graduated first in his class at West Point (1903), had a distinguished combat record in WWI, and rose to become chief of staff (1930–1935). He defended the Philippines against the Japanese (1941–1942), but had to escape to Australia when his small force was overwhelmed, pressing him to surrender. He vowed at the time, “I shall return.” He was responsible for the “reconquest” of New Guinea (1942–1945) and of the Philippines (1944–1945), at which time he was appointed General of the Army (1944). He retired from the army, but when North Korea crossed the 38th parallel and invaded South Korea (1950), he was asked to command UN forces to support the South’s sovereignty. After a surprise landing at Inchon forced the North Koreans to retreat, MacArthur invaded the North until he was beaten back by Chinese troops. After he was removed from command, he received a hero’s welcome on his return to the US.



**John Edgar Hoover** (1895–1972) – US lawyer and director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) from its inception in 1924, where he built a powerful network for the detection of organized crime, including a national fingerprint collection program. Born in Washington, DC, his drive against alleged communist activities after WWII, and his opposition to the Kennedy administration and others brought much criticism over abuse of power. He served under eight presidents, none of whom would dismiss him, since he kept (incriminating) files on them and their associates. During his tenure, the FBI (named officially in 1935) grew from a corrupt Bureau of Investigation to a respected and highly professional national police agency, with responsibility for counterespionage within the US as well as counterterrorism. Hoover was accused of waging a personal campaign of harassment against leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, notably Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He wrote a few books including *Persons in Hiding* (1938), *Master of Deceit* (1958), and *A Study of Communism* (1962).



**Hubert Horatio Humphrey** (1911–1978) – US political leader and US vice president (1965–1969). Born in Wallace, South Dakota, Humphrey was trained as a pharmacist. Settling in Minnesota, he became active in Democratic Party politics and was elected mayor of Minneapolis (1945). In 1948, he was elected to the US Senate, where for three terms, he distinguished himself as an eloquent and effective promoter of key legislation. An unsuccessful presidential candidate in 1960, he sternly supported the 1964 Civil Rights Act. He served as vice president under President Lyndon B. Johnson (1965–1969) and made another unsuccessful run for the presidency in 1968. Briefly professor at the University of Minnesota, Humphrey was reelected to the US Senate in 1970 and 1976.



522 **Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill** (1874–1965) – British statesman, prime minister during Britain’s “finest hour” (Battle of Britain, 1940), historian, and painter. The son of Lord Randolph Churchill, he began his career as a soldier, serving with a lancer regiment at the Battle of Omdurman (1898). As a war correspondent in South Africa (1899–1900), he was captured by the Boers, but escaped. First elected to the British Parliament in 1900 as a Conservative, he joined the Liberals in 1904, largely on account of his Free Trade principles. As First Lord of the Admiralty (1911–1915), when he thought war likely, he activated a “practice mobiliza-



tion” and then kept the fleet at war stations. He was held responsible for the disaster for the Dardanelles expedition against the Turks in 1915, and resigned to serve on the Western Front. Later he became secretary for war (1918–1921), and the colonial secretary (1921–1922). He joined the Conservatives in 1922 and, though chancellor of the exchequer from 1924–1929, was thereafter kept out of office by his insistence in warning the country — against his party’s beliefs — that Nazi Germany was a menace, and by his rejection of concessions his party was making in India. On the outbreak of the WWII, public opinion forced Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain to make him First Lord of the Admiralty. After Chamberlain resigned, he became prime minister (1940) and minister of defense. He was the leader of the Opposition during Attlee’s Labor administration (1945–1951) and finally, prime minister again (1951–1955). Refer also to **Endnote 376** in Volume 7.

**Cecil John Rhodes** (1853–1902) – British businessman, colonial statesman, and leading protagonist of imperialism in South Africa; “founder” of Rhodesia. He went to Cape Colony in 1870 and quickly made a fortune from diamond mining in the Orange Free State. He used his control of the De Beers Diamond Company and his interests in the Transvaal gold mines to further his vision of British imperialism in Africa. In 1887, he founded the British South Africa Company, which received a royal charter two years later, to colonize the country north of the Transvaal, later known as Rhodesia. He entered politics and by 1890 had become Premier of Cape Colony. In 1896, he was forced to resign, because of his implication in the Jameson Raid.



**Horatio Viscount Nelson** (1758–1805) – British admiral whose victory at the Battle of Trafalgar (1805) destroyed Franco-Spanish naval power during the Napoleonic wars. Nelson was a supreme exponent of superior fire power to annihilate the enemy. His battle plans, which left much to the initiative of his captains, depended on careful timing and surprise, the objective being to break up the opposing fleet and “bring about a pell-mell battle.” Nelson lost the sight of his right eye in action off Corsica (1794), was appointed commodore in 1796, rear admiral in 1797, and lost his right arm at Santa Cruz later that year. In 1798, he virtually annihilated a fleet of French ships near the mouth of the Nile River. In 1801, he was promoted to vice admiral and, in the Baltic, as second-in-command to Sir Hyde Parker, he led a crippling attack on the Danish fleet anchored off Copenhagen (1801). Following the engagement he was given a nobleman’s rank of



“viscount.” In 1803, he was given command of the Mediterranean fleet. During the Battle of Trafalgar, 18 out of 33 enemy ships were taken or destroyed, but Nelson’s fleet remained intact. Nelson himself was mortally wounded on board his flagship, *Victory*, shortly after the start of action.

**Arthur Wellesley, First Duke of Wellington**

(1769–1852) – English soldier, who defeated Napoleon’s armies in the Peninsular War and at Waterloo. He was commissioned in 1787, but from 1796–1805 served as both a soldier and an administrator in India. On his return to England, he became a member of parliament for Rye. In 1808, he was given command of the army that was sent to Portugal to fight the French, whom he defeated. For allowing the French to withdraw, he was recalled and court-martialed, but was exonerated. He returned to his command on the death of John Moore at Corunna (1809), and in a campaign lasting from 1809–1814, he drove the French back to the Pyrenees and into France. He was chosen, with Castlereagh, to represent Britain at the Congress of Vienna (1814–1815) and brought about the final defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo (June 18, 1815). He later became a member of Lord Liverpool’s cabinet, and attended the subsequent congresses of Aix-la-Chapelle (1818) and Verona (1822). As prime minister (1828–1830), his obstinate opposition to parliamentary reform made him unpopular, despite his great services to the country, and on more than one occasion his house was stoned by mobs.



**John Moore** (1761–1809) – British general, born in Glasgow, Strathclyde. From 1794, he served in many countries in Europe, and in the West Indies, but is remembered for his command of the British army in Spain (1808–1809), where he was forced to retreat to Corunna. There he defeated a French attack, but was mortally wounded (as recounted in the poem by Charles Wolfe).

**Simon Bolivar** (1783–1830) – Venezuelan revolutionary leader, who liberated much of South America from Spanish rule. Bolivar traveled in Europe, where he became influenced by the ideas of John Locke and the philosophers of the 18th-century French Enlightenment. His early attempts at revolt ended when, after hard fighting, he was driven out of Venezuela and Colombia (1815) by the royalist forces, and fled to exile in Jamaica. He returned in 1818 with British volunteers, raised an army, crossed the Andes and established the independence of Colombia and Venezuela. In 1822, he liberated Ecuador and took over command of the



Peruvian army from San Martin. With his army, Bolivar conquered and liberated the territory now called Bolivia (1825). His overall plan for his country was that of a republican confederation, but he came up against the narrow-minded regionalism of his countrymen. Betrayed by the separatism of his own men, he died a disappointed man.

**Giuseppe Garibaldi** (1807–1882) – Italian nationalist, who, with Cavour, helped to achieve the unification of Italy. A supporter of Mazzini's Young Italy Movement, he was forced to take refuge in South America (1834), where, during the war between Uruguay and Argentina, he commanded the troops defending Montevideo (1843). After returning to Italy in 1848 he commanded the defense of the Roman Republic against the French (1849), but was again driven into exile. Later he led guerrillas against the Austrians in the region of the Italian lakes (1859). A year later he sailed from Genoa with his "Thousand Redshirts" and eventually conquered Naples and Sicily, thus forming the nucleus of a united Italy. He then marched northward and joined forces with Cavour at the Volturno. His conquests, united with those of the Piedmontese, largely achieved the united Italy he had dreamed of. He made two unsuccessful attempts to capture Rome (1862 and 1867) and in 1870 led a volunteer force in the Franco-Prussian War. Garibaldi was the supreme example of the romantic patriot-leader and was greeted with enormous enthusiasm when he visited England in 1864.



**Franz Joseph Haydn** (1732–1809) – Austrian composer known as "father of the symphony." He took as his starting point the symphonies of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, the second son of the more acclaimed Johann Sebastian Bach, and from them evolved the classical form of a set of contrasting orchestral movements that were musically interrelated and balanced. Similarly, he evolved the classical form of the string quartet. Haydn was largely self-taught in composition and reached maturity slowly. In 1761, he entered the service of the Austro-Hungarian Esterhazy family and was free to compose and direct his compositions with an orchestra and choir always at his disposal. He wrote 104 symphonies, many of them known by popular nicknames such as *The Farewell* (45), *The Surprise* (94), *The Clock* (101), *The Drum-roll* (103), and *The London* (104). He wrote also over 80 string quartets and 20 operas, as well as the major oratorios of his later years, *The Creation* (1798) and *The Seasons* (1801). Haydn also wrote the national anthem of Imperial Austria, *The Emperor's Hymn* later to be used in Germany as the tune to *Deutschland Uber Alles*. He visited England, where he enjoyed great



popularity and received a musical doctorate from Oxford University. His brother, Michael, was also a gifted composer and, with Mozart's father, wrote the *Toy Symphony*, for long ascribed to Joseph.

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** (1756–1791) – Austrian composer whose talents emerged at an early age. When he was six, he was a harpsichord prodigy and by age 12 he had written his first opera — and had it produced. The promise which was to make him unequalled in terms of musical imagination and achievement was to be fulfilled in the course of his short creative life, but his maturity was marked by personal troubles, fickle audiences, unreliable patrons and periods of extreme poverty. Mozart wrote about 40 symphonies, important among them *The Paris* (31), *The Linz* (36), *The Prague* (38), and *The Jupiter* (41). The classical, three-movement concerto was, however, Mozart's own creation; his 21-piano concertos are the form's first and most splendidly varied monuments. He also brought operatic art to one of its highest points, first in his collaborations with Lorenzo da Ponte as librettist — *The Marriage of Figaro* (1786, based on *Beaumarchais*), *Don Giovanni* (1787), and *Così fan Tutti* (1790) — then in his humanistic masterpiece with its Masonic symbolism, *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*, 1791). Mozart made a distinguished contribution to chamber music with his 24 string quartets, violin sonatas, and other works. His final masterpiece, a setting of the *Requiem*, was unfinished when he died from typhus. Mozart was buried in Vienna in a pauper's grave.



**Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** (1749–1832) – German poet, novelist, dramatist, critic, politician, scientist, painter, and philosopher, who regarded as his province the entire range of human knowledge, and excelled in many fields. His central philosophical principle was the concept of organic growth, which emerged in his biological and zoological work and in his imaginative writings. His supreme dramatic achievement, *Faust*, completed in the last years of his life, is a representation of man's unceasing search for breadth and depth of experience. His outstanding novels are *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (*The Sorrows of Young Werther*, 1774), which Goethe based upon the emotions of his characters, rather than on a rational, 18th-century system of values, and *Wilhelm Meister Lehrjahre* (*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, 1812), which was based closely on events in his own life. Goethe also wrote treatises on botany and optics and was a pioneer of the theory of evolution. A journey to Italy (1786) gave him the inspiration for *Römische Elegien* (*Roman Elegies*, 1786), translated by W.H. Auden and E. Mayer, and



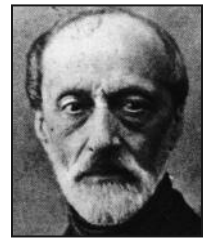


the enthusiasm to express dramatically his humanistic ideals in *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (*Iphigenia in Tauris*, 1787). At the same time he completed *Egmont* (1788), a historical drama that expanded Goethe's fundamental belief in the external forces motivating men's actions, a concept which found its ultimate and most compelling expression in *Faust*.

**Voltaire** (1694–1778) – pen name of **Francois-Marie Arouet**; France's universal literary genius, a dramatist, philosopher, poet, novelist, historian, and contributor to the *Encyclopédie* (*Systematic Dictionary of the Sciences, Arts, and Crafts*). Voltaire spent his life ridiculing, with wit and irony, the vices and injustices of his time. In the best of his philosophical contes, such as *Zadig* (*The Book of Fate*, 1747), *Micromégas* (1752), and, above all, *Candide* (1759), Voltaire fused subject matter with style. In *Candide*, a vitriolic work inspired by the Lisbon earthquake and by Voltaire's earlier quarrel with Frederick the Great of Prussia, he ridiculed the absurdity of philosophical optimism, especially the theories of Leibniz and Pope. Voltaire spent the years 1726–1728 exiled in England, an experience that impressed him considerably and caused him to write his first masterpiece, the *Lettres philosophiques* (*Letters on the English*, 1734), a thinly-veiled onslaught on French institutions, which has been described as “the first bomb thrown at the Ancien Régime.” He also contributed articles to the monument of 18th-century rationalism and scepticism, the *Encyclopédie*. Voltaire was vehemently anti-religious and was in constant conflict with authority for attacking the tyranny of church and state in France.



**Giuseppe Mazzini** (1805–1872) – Italian nationalist and revolutionary. In his 20s, he joined the Carbonari, a political secret society formed in 1815 to unite Italy as a republic. In 1831, he formed the “Young Italy” movement and, becoming the apostle of international brotherhood, expanded it into a “Young Europe” movement. In the revolutionary atmosphere of 1848, Mazzini's forces liberated Milan and set up a Roman republic, whose military force was commanded by Garibaldi. As a fervent republican, Mazzini did not approve of the Kingdom of Italy created by Cavour and Garibaldi under the Piedmontese crown, and spent his later years in exile, though he sometimes visited Italy secretly.



**Mikhail Bakunin** (1814–1876) – Russian anarchist aristocrat and guards officer who resigned his commission over Russia's maltreatment of the Polish nationalist rebels. His pamphlet *Reaction in Germany* (1842) and his revolu-

tionary ideas led to his permanent exile. He was involved in the February Revolution (Paris, 1848), and helped to inspire the Czech rising (Prague, 1848) and the Saxony revolt (1849). In 1849, he was arrested in Dresden, but though condemned to death by the authorities in both Berlin and Vienna, he was not executed but imprisoned in Austria, then handed over to the Russians and sent to Siberia (1855). After six years, he escaped and devoted the rest of his life to Western European revolutionary movements.



**Aleksandr (or Alexander) Kerensky** (1881–1970) – the first and last prime minister of a democratic, parliamentary Russian government. A lawyer by profession, he was elected as a Social-Democratic member of the Duma in 1912, becoming minister for war following the March Revolution of 1917, and by July was prime minister of the Provisional Government. His policy of continuing the war had no public support and he was swept aside by the October Revolution — Lenin and Trotsky's coup d'état. Kerensky tried unsuccessfully to rally resistance to the Bolsheviks but was forced to flee abroad to France and later went to the US (1946), where he died.



**Aleksandr Sergeyeovich Pushkin** (1799–1837) – Russian poet and writer. The Byronic verse-novel *Eugene Onegin* (1833), and *Boris Godunov* (1831) a historical tragic drama, provided libretti for operas by Tchaikovsky and Mussorgsky respectively, and are considered his finest works. Pushkin was a prodigious writer; besides his verse-tales and dramas he was a master of the short story, of which *The Queen of Spades* (1834) is one of the most famous. *The Bronze Horseman*, unpublished in his lifetime, is among the best known of his epic poems and the folk poem *The Golden Cockerel* (1835) was the basis of an opera by Rimsky-Korsakov.



**Benito Juarez** (1806–1872) – Mexican reformer and revolutionary leader. He led the successful liberal revolution of 1855 against the regime of President Santa Anna and, as a result, became minister of justice (1855–1857). His radical reforms — judicial, educational, and anti-clerical — precipitated a violent reaction, and, during the civil war that followed (1858–1860), he was declared provisional president, but was forced to abandon Mexico City to his conservative opponents. However, he reorganized his forces in Vera



Cruz and led them to victory. On assuming power, he suspended payment of foreign debts. This gave Napoleon III of France, acting ostensibly on behalf of French capitalists, an excuse to invade Mexico and set up a puppet empire, with the Austrian Archduke Maximilian as emperor. Juarez and his forces maintained their resistance, encouraged by the promise of help from the US. When, under US pressure, Napoleon withdrew his army, Juarez took the initiative by capturing and executing Maximilian (1867). Juarez was president until his death, when he was succeeded by his lieutenant, Porfirio Diaz.

**Jose de San Martin** (1778–1850) – Argentinian revolutionary who liberated Chile and Peru from Spanish rule. After helping the newly formed Argentinian government in its War of Independence (1812–1813), he was given command of the revolutionary armies operating against Spanish rule in Peru (1814). Considering it most feasible to strike at Peru through Chile, he made an astonishing march over the Andes and defeated the Spanish army at Chacabuco (1817). With the help of the former British admiral, Lord Cochrane, he afterward formed a fleet and reorganized his army, sailing for Peru in 1820. After six months of fruitless negotiation with the Spaniards, he entered Lima in 1821 and accepted the title of *Protector*. In 1822, the rivalry of Bolivar and local suspicion of San Martin's intentions led him to resign and leave for Europe, where he died in poverty in 1850.



523 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhayli, *Al-Tafsir al-Munir fi al-'Aqida wa-al-Shari'ah wa-al-Manhaj*, Volume 5. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āshir, 1411AH), p. 285 (originally narrated by al-Suddi and Qatādaḥ, and recorded by Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim).

524 Ibid.

525 Ibid.

526 Narrated by Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq and recorded by Aḥmad ibn Hanbal and Aḥmad Shākir.

أَنَّهُ قَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. كَيْفَ الْفَلَاحُ بَعْدَ هَذِهِ الْآيَةِ: لَيْسَ بِأَمَانِيكُمْ وَلَا أَمَانِي أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ يَعْمَلُ سُوءًا يُجْزَى بِهِ فَكُلُّ سُوءٍ عَمَلْنَا جُزِينَا بِهِ؟ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: غَفَرَ اللَّهُ لَكَ يَا أَبَا بَكْرٍ. أَلَسْتَ عَمْرَضٌ؟ أَلَسْتَ تَنْصَبُ؟ أَلَسْتَ حَزَنٌ؟ أَلَسْتَ تُصِيبُكَ الْأَوْءَاءُ؟ قَالَ: بَلَى. قَالَ: فَهُوَ مَا جُزُونَ بِهِ.

527 Narrated by Abū Hurayrah and recorded by Muslim, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nisā'i, and Aḥmad ibn Hanbal.

لَمَّا نَزَلَ مَنْ يَعْمَلُ سُوءًا يُجْزَى بِهِ شَقَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَشَكَوْا ذَلِكَ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ قَارِبُوا وَسَدُّوا وَفِي كُلِّ مَا يَصِيبُ الْمُؤْمِنَ كَفَّارَةٌ حَتَّى السُّوْكَةَ بِشَاكُهَا أَوْ التَّكْبَةَ بِتُكْبِهَا.

528 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, Volume 5, p. 292 (originally narrated by Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah, and recorded by al-Bukhārī).

529 Ibid., (originally narrated by al-Suddī and recorded by Ibn Abī Ḥātim).

530 **Umm al-Mu'minīn Sawdah bint Zam'ah ibn Qays** – the Prophet's (ﷺ) wife. She became a Muslimah while married to her cousin al-Sakrān ibn 'Amr, who accepted Islam shortly after she did. They were both members of the *hijrah* team that went to al-Ḥabashah (Abyssinia). When they returned to Makkah, al-Sakrān died, following which she was betrothed by Khawlah bint Ḥakīm to the Prophet (ﷺ), who married her at a time when she already had five or six children. The marriage took place during the tenth year of his prophethood, after his first wife, Khadījah, had passed away (some historical references say these events took place in the eight year of his prophethood). The *ṣadāq* or *mahr* (bridewealth) presented to her by the Prophet (ﷺ) was 400 *dirhams*. She later joined him in Madinah, after the Hijrah.

When Sawdah grew older and realized how her husband felt toward 'Ā'ishah, she proposed, “O Apostle of Allah! Your day with me I permit you to have with 'Ā'ishah [the Prophet (ﷺ) used to divide time between his wives by spending one day out of the week at each of their houses].” Remaining his wife until he passed on, she was known for her dignity, generosity, and high moral character.

531 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, Volume 5, p. 292 (originally narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās and recorded by al-Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd and al-Ḥākim).

In a parallel occurrence, Rāfi' ibn Khadij expressed his intention to divorce his wife, Khawlah bint Muḥammad ibn Muslimah, because of her old age or for other reasons (which are enumerated in other narratives of the same incident). She implored him, “Do not divorce me. [Rather], give me whatever you decide [of your attentions].” And it is said that the *āyah* was revealed over this husband-and-wife interaction, “**And if a woman has reason to fear ill-treatment from her husband, or that he might turn away from her, it shall not be wrong for the two to set things peacefully to rights between themselves...**” (4:128).<sup>a</sup>

a Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, Volume 5, p. 292 (originally narrated Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyab who heard it from al-Zuhri, and then it was recorded by Ibn 'Uyaynah and Sa'īd ibn Manṣūr).

532 Ibid., pp. 292–93.

533 **Mary Wollstonecraft** (1759–1797) – refer to p. 250 and **Endnote 159** in Volume 6.

534 Meghan Casserly, *The Geography Of The Gender Pay Gap: Women's Earnings By State*. (New York, New York: Forbes website, September 19, 2013).  
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/meghancasserly/2013/09/19/the-geography-of-the-gender-pay-gap-womens-earnings-by-state/>

Yuki Noguchi, *50 Years After The Equal Pay Act, Gender Wage Gap Endures*. (Washington, DC: NPR website, June 10, 2013).  
<http://www.npr.org/2013/06/10/189280329/50-years-after-the-equal-pay-act-gender-wage-gap-endures>

Catherine Rampell, *The Gender Wage Gap, Around the World*. (New York, New York: The New York Times website, March 9, 2010).  
[http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/03/09/the-gender-wage-gap-around-the-world/?\\_php=true&\\_type=blogs&\\_r=0](http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/03/09/the-gender-wage-gap-around-the-world/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0)

535 In the United States, the suffragist movement officially began at the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony founded the National Woman Suffrage Association 1869; at about the same time, Lucy Stone formed the American Woman Suffrage Association. The two groups merged in 1890 and the new organization was known as the National American Woman Suffrage Association. The perseverance of this group and others led to the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution (1920), which gave American women the right to vote.

536 Narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar and recorded in the *sunans* of Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Mājah.

أبغض الحلال إلى الله تعالى الطلاق.

537 **Pope John Paul II** (1920–2005) – pope from 1978 until his death in 2005; the first non-Italian to be elected pope since 1522. Born near Krakow, Poland, his given name was Karol Wojtyła. He upheld the tradition of papal infallibility, condemned artificial contraception, women priests, married priests, and modern dress for monks and nuns — views that aroused criticism from liberalizing elements in the Church. In 1939, at the beginning of WWII, Wojtyła was conscripted for forced labor by the Germans, working in quarries and a chemical factory, but from 1942 studied for the priesthood ille-



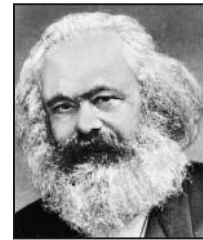
gally in Krakow. After the war he taught ethics and theology at the universities of Lublin and Krakow, becoming archbishop of Krakow in 1964. He was made a cardinal in 1967. He was shot and wounded by a Turk in what appeared to be an attempt on his life (1981). Although he warned against the involvement of priests in political activity, he opposed the Gulf Wars of 1991 and 2003, and condemned arms manufacturers as sinful.

538 Narrated by Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah and recorded by Imams al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and Abū Dāwūd.

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَقْسِمُ بَيْنَ نِسَائِهِ فَيَعْدُلُ وَيَقُولُ اللَّهُمَّ هَذَا قِسْمِي فِيمَا أَمْلِكُ فَلَا تَلْمُنِي فِيمَا تَمْلِكُ وَلَا أَمْلِكُ.

539 **Spanish Civil War (Guerra Civil Española)** – a three-year war from 1936–1939 between the left-leaning Spanish Republicans, who wanted to maintain the existing Spanish Republic, and the right-wing Nationalists led by General Francisco Franco (1892–1975). In the end, Franco, who was backed by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, won the war and ruled Spain — under what Western historians characterize as a fascist dictatorship — until his death, a period of 36 years.

540 **Karl Marx** (1818–1883) – in all its varieties, Marxism more or less traces its beginnings to the teachings of Karl Marx, a German philosopher, economic theorist, socialist, and professed revolutionary. Through political movements influenced by his thought, Marx and Marxism rank among the most powerful forces in the 20th century. Communist movements represent both a continuation and an extension of Marx's ideas, and most socialist movements of the contemporary period bear the imprint of his views.



Karl Heinrich Marx was born in Trier, in the German Rhineland, on May 5, 1818, the second child and oldest son of Heinrich and Henrietta Marx. After the defeat of Napoleon, the Rhineland had been given by the Congress of Vienna to Prussia. Marx's family had been Jewish, and his father had been born Herschel Levi, son of Rabbi Marx Levi. Under the influence of the Enlightenment and a rationalist education, Herschel Levi, a lawyer, left that heritage behind and changed his name to Marx. In the wake of the Prussian anti-Jewish statutes of 1816, to avoid being denied the right to practice law, he joined the Lutheran Church in 1817, the year before Karl was born, and changed his first name to Heinrich.

A neighbor, Freiherr Ludwig von Westphalen, befriended Karl in his teen years, contributed to his rapid intellectual development, and eventually gave the hand of his daughter Jenny to Karl in marriage. In 1835, Marx

became a law student at the University of Bonn, and the following year transferred to the University of Berlin. There he came under the spell of Hegel's philosophy, the most important intellectual influence of his life. In 1841, he received a doctorate from the University of Jena, with a thesis on Epicurus and Democritus dedicated to von Westphalen. After his marriage to Jenny von Westphalen in 1843 and the suppression of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, which he edited, Marx went into exile in Paris, where he began a lifelong friendship with Friedrich Engels, became a dedicated social radical, and embarked upon a career as a revolutionary publicist.

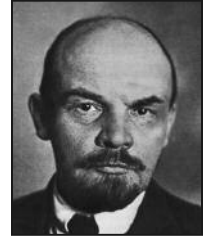
His *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* (1844) provide a sketch of the historical materialism on which he would elaborate in later writings. Expelled from France in 1845, Marx moved to Brussels. There he made his first contacts with actual movements of working people, and, at the request of a laborers' league, Marx and Engels wrote the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) as a critical analysis of capitalism and false socialisms, and as a call to revolutionary action. Expelled from Brussels, Marx returned to Paris and then to Cologne. Arrested for sedition, Marx was expelled from Germany and went to London, where he spent the remainder of his life. Throughout the London years, his only regular work was for a brief period when he wrote articles for the *New York Tribune*. For the most part, he and his family lived in poverty, made bearable by the courageous sacrifices of Jenny Marx, and by gifts from Engels, which came out of family textile interests. Karl Marx spent most of his time in the British Museum writing political pamphlets and doing research for his analysis of capitalism, *Das Kapital*. He was able to complete and publish (in 1867) only the first volume of this massive undertaking before his death. Engels completed the work, publishing the second volume in 1885, and the third in 1894.

Jenny died of cancer in 1881. Karl died in London on March 14, 1883. In the eulogy at his funeral, Engels said,

His mission in life was to contribute in one way or another to the overthrow of capitalist society... to contribute to the liberation of the present-day proletariat... Fighting was his element. And he fought with a passion, a tenacity which few could rival... and consequently was the best-hated and most calumniated man of his time... He died beloved, revered, and mourned by millions of revolutionary fellow workers from the mines of Siberia to the coasts of California, in all points of Europe and America... His name and his work will endure through the ages.<sup>a</sup>

a Isaiah Berlin, *Karl Marx: His Life and Environment*, 4th Edition. (London, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 206.

- 541 **Vladimir Ilyich Lenin** (1870–1924) – architect and leader of the Bolshevik Revolution, which created the USSR. Lenin became a revolutionary at the age of 16 when his elder brother was hanged for involvement in a plot to assassinate the tsar. He left Russia in 1900, living first in Germany, then Brussels, Paris, and London; while in exile, he was writing pamphlets developing Marxism, and editing *Iskra* (*Spark*), the Russian Social Democrat newspaper. He emerged as left-wing leader of the Communist Party when, at its congress in London (1903), a vote on the composition of the paper's editorial board gave his group a majority (the word *bolsheviki* means *members of the majority*). In the Revolution of 1905, Lenin returned to St. Petersburg, but was again forced into exile, where he continued to prepare for a more comprehensive revolution. He returned to Russia following the March Revolution of 1917; attempting to take it over, he was forced to take refuge in Finland in July, but returned in October, organized the Bolshevik coup d'état, and seized power from the Kerensky administration. He set up, as government, the Council of People's Commissars; nationalized the banks and the means of production, distribution, and exchange; redistributed the land to the peasants and withdrew Russia from WWI by signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Meanwhile, Russia was in the midst of a civil war, in which Leon Trotsky emerged as the creator of the Red Army, on half a dozen fronts, and the strain of this fighting, combined with socialization of the whole country, caused the economy to collapse (1920). To restore it, the New Economic Policy — allowing a limited measure of capitalist enterprise — was introduced, to be abolished later by Stalin. Wounded in an attempt on his life by an anti-Bolshevik “social revolutionary” in 1923, Lenin's health broke down and he died early the following year.



- 542 **Mao Zedong or Mao Tse-tung** (1893–1976) – Chinese political leader and Marxist theoretician. A founder of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1921, Mao soon emerged as its leader. He organized the Long March (1934–1936) and the war of liberation (1937–1949), following which he established a People's Republic and Communist rule in China; he headed the CCP and government until his death. His influence diminished with the failure of his Great Leap Forward (1958–1960), but he emerged dominant again during the 1966–1969 Cultural Revolution. Mao adapted communism to Chinese conditions, as set out in the *Little Red Book*.



Mao, son of a peasant farmer in Hunan province, was once library assistant at Beijing University and a headmaster at Changsha. He became chief of CCP propaganda under the Guomindang (Nationalist) leader Sun Yat-



sen (Sun Zhong Shan) until dismissed by Sun's successor Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jie Shi). From 1931–1934, Mao set up a Communist republic at Jiangxi and, together with Zhu De, marshaled the Red Army and organized the Long March to Shaanxi to evade Nationalist suppressive tactics. CCP head from 1935, Mao secured an alliance with the Nationalist forces (1936–1945), and together they tried to repel the Japanese invaders of WWII. At Yen'an, he built up a people's republic (1936–1947) and married his third wife, Jiang Qing (1939). Civil war with the Nationalists was renewed from 1946–1949 when Mao finally defeated them at Nanking and established the People's Republic and Communist Party rule under his leadership. During the civil war, he successfully employed mobile, rural-based guerrilla tactics.

Mao served as party head until his death (1976) and as state president until 1959. After the damages of the Cultural Revolution, the Great Helmsman, as he was called, working with his prime minister Zhou Enlai, oversaw a period of reconstruction from 1970 until deteriorating health weakened his political grip in his final years.

Mao's writings and thoughts dominated the functioning of the People's Republic of China from 1949–1976. He wrote some 2,300 publications, comprising three million words; 740 million copies of his *Quotations* have been printed. For the purpose of reducing rural-urban differences, and for perpetual revolution to prevent the emergence of new elites, he stressed the need for rural rather than urban-based revolutions in Asia. Mao helped precipitate the Sino-Soviet split (1960) and was a firm advocate of a non-aligned Third World. Since 1978, the leadership of Deng Xiaoping reinterpreted Maoism, criticized its policy excesses, and commercialized the nation, but many of Mao's ideas remain valued.

- 543 **Antonio Gramsci** (1891–1937) – political leader and theoretician, born in Ales, Sardinia, Italy. Brought up in poverty, he studied at Turin University and was drawn into left-wing causes. He helped to establish the separate Italian Communist Party in 1921, and in 1924 became leader of the Party in parliament. In 1926, the Communist Party was banned by the fascists and he was arrested, spending the rest of his life in prison. He completed some 30 notebooks (over 2,000 printed pages) of reflections, which were published posthumously as *Lettere del carcere* (*Letters from Prison*, 1947) and are now regarded as one of the most important political texts of the century.



- 544 **Moral Majority** – a US political action committee founded in 1979; played a leading part in the revival of the New Right. It campaigns for the election of morally conservative politicians and for changes to public policy in such

areas as abortion, homosexuality, and school prayers. It is associated with Christian fundamentalists, who in the 1980s came to play a prominent role in US politics. Refer also to **Endnote 185** in Volume 4 and Endnote 344 in Volume 7.

545 **First International (International Workingmen's Association)** – founded in London in 1864; Karl Marx was a key figure in inspiring its creation and was later chosen as its leader. Its goal was to unite all workers for the purpose of achieving political power along the lines set down by Marx and Friedrich Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848). It amalgamated an assortment of disaffected leftist (and some right-wing) intellectuals ranging from communists and socialists to anarchists and trade union organizers, all of whom gathered for the organization's first congress in Geneva, Switzerland (1866). The inaugural meeting in London was brimming with a hodgepodge of radicals, including but not limited to English Owenites and Chartists, French Proudhonists and Blanquists, Irish nationalists, Polish patriots, Italian Mazzinists, and German Socialists. The binding factor amongst the initial set of participants was less about an ideological common ground, and more about an accumulated burden of shared grievances crying for an outlet. The integral interconnection among them was provided by Karl Marx, who viewed the International as a vehicle for revolution; however, it played only a minor role in the revolutionary Commune of Paris (1871). At its peak, the International had between five and eight million members. Power struggles within the organization greatly weakened it, and the clash between Marx and the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin led to its complete disintegration (1876).

546 **Khaybar** – a famous oasis about 150km north of Madinah, in the Arabian Peninsula. In 6AH, the Prophet (ﷺ) prevailed over the Yahūd and requisitioned the oasis, whose inhabitants were Jewish and Hebrew tribes. Under the terms of the agreement between the Islamic State of Madinah and the Yahūd of Khaybar (the political and ideological partisans of Jewish origin who were agitating against Allah's Prophet – ﷺ), the Jews could continue to stay on their land and cultivate it, but were to hand over one-half of the produce to the Islamic central authority in Madinah.

547 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhayli, *Al-Tafsir al-Munir*, Volume 5, pp. 314–15.

548 **Bandar ibn Sulṭān ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz** (1953–present) – commonly written as Bandar bin Sultan; former ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United States (1983–2005) and serving as the Director General of the Saudi Intelligence Agency since 2012. Prince Bandar was born in al-Ṭā'if, the summer capital of the Kingdom, the son of "His Royal Highness" Prince Sulṭān ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz Āl Sa'ūd, the second deputy prime minister, minis-

ter of Defense and Aviation, and Inspector-General. He is married to Princess Hayfā' bint Fayṣal, who has borne him four sons and four daughters.

Prince Bandar graduated from the British Royal Air Force College at Cranwell, England, in 1968 and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF). He received pilot training in the United Kingdom and the United States, and has flown numerous fighter aircraft including the JP 3-4, T-38, T-33, F-5, F-53/55, F-102, and the F-15. During his 17-year military career he attained the rank of lieutenant colonel, commanded fighter squadrons at three RSAF bases, and undertook program management responsibilities in the major RSAF modernization project Peace Hawk. In addition, he carried out special assignments in Washington, DC, during the debates between the US administration and the US Congress concerning the sale to Saudi Arabia of F-15s in 1978 and of AWACs in 1981. One year later, he was assigned to Washington, DC, as the Kingdom's defense attache.



Bandar completed his post-graduate work in several US military schools including staff courses with the Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama, and with the Industrial College of the Armed Forces at Fort McNair in Washington, DC. He received his master's degree in international public policy from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, Washington, DC, (1980).

His highest profile appointment occurred when he was named ambassador to the United States by the "Custodian" of the Two Holy Masjids, King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz Āl Sa'ūd on September 27, 1983. As the Saudi ambassador, he was the dean of the diplomatic corps in the United States. On August 7, 1995, he was promoted to the rank of minister.

As special envoy for the "Custodian" of the Two Holy Masjids King Fahd, Bandar was involved in cease-fire negotiations in the Lebanese civil war, and has been instrumental in resolving a number of regional and international crises, such as the Lockerbie incident, which occurred in 1988. He was the Saudi delegate in the Gulf Cooperation Council mission observing the 1991 Middle East peace talks in Madrid, and has been a regular member of the Kingdom's delegation to the United Nations General Assembly since 1984. Bandar has been awarded many medals and decorations, including the Hawk Flying Medal of Aviation, the King Fayṣal Medal, and the King 'Abd al-'Azīz Sash, as well as honors from other nations.

More recently, as part of the American, Israeli, and Saudi strategy to destroy the axis of resistance stretching from Islamic Iran to Lebanon, by attacking its weakest link in Syria, Bandar was the point man to organize the profusion of sectarian foreign mercenaries who entered Syria from Jordan and Turkey, where they received training, compensation, and were equipped

with weapons of various kinds. For failing to dislodge Syrian President Bashar al-Asad from power, Bandar was relieved of his responsibilities relating to Syria in February, 2014.

549 **Robert “Bud” McFarlane** (1937–present) – National Security Advisor during the Reagan administration (1983–1985); replaced in 1985 as head of the National Security Council (NSC) by Vice Admiral John M. Poindexter.

**Contras** – refer to **Endnote 48** in Volume 4.

550 **Saddam Hussein** (1937–2006) – president of Iraq (1979–2003); born in Takkrit, Iraq. He joined the Arab Ba’th Socialist Party in 1957, and was sentenced to death in 1959 for the attempted execution of President Qāsim, but escaped to Egypt. He played a prominent role in the 1968 “revolution,” and became vice president of the ruling Revolutionary Command Council in 1969. On the retirement of his colleague President al-Bakr, he became sole president. His attack on Islamic Iran in 1980, to gain control of the Strait of Hormuz, was his first act of aggression, extending into an unexpected eight long years of warfare, which ended in 1988. His invasion of Kuwait in 1990 drew Iraq into another full-scale war. Driven from Kuwait in 1991, chiefly by the Americans and the British, Iraq would endure international isolation and economic sanctions for the next decade. In March, 2003, the Anglo-American invasion toppled the government, and Saddam Hussein was captured, imprisoned for a short time, hastily “tried” for his crimes in a kangaroo court, and then executed on the first day of ‘Īd al-Aḍḥá by the US-installed puppet government (2006). Refer also to **Endnote 21** in Volume 2, Endnote 151 in Volume 3, and **Endnote 222** in Volume 5.



551 **Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)** – often involved in subversive activities, and suspected of internal subversive activities from time to time, it suffered loss of credibility following the investigation into the Watergate affair in the mid-1970s. For more detail, refer to Endnote 449 above.

**‘Abd al-Karīm Qāsim** (1914–1963) – Iraqi politician and prime minister from 1958, who adopted a pro-Soviet policy. Qāsim pardoned the leaders of the pro-Egyptian party who tried to assassinate him in 1959. He was executed after the 1963 coup.

552 **Imam Khomeini** (1902–1989) – refer to **Endnote 232** in Volume 2.

553 Narrated by Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad who got it from Abū Bakr ibn 'Abbās who got it from Ḥamīd al-Kindī who got it from 'Ubādaḥ ibn Nasī who heard it from Abū Rayḥānah; and recorded by Aḥmad ibn Hanbal.

من انتسب إلى تسعة آباء كفار يريدُ بهم عزراً وفخراً فهو عاشرهم في النار.

554 **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** – refer to Endnote 452 above.

555 **Battle of Uḥud (3AH)** – the clash at a hilly area called Uḥud, north of Madinah. The forces from Makkah had arrived to take revenge for their resounding defeat during the clash at Badr in the previous year. In this battle the Prophet (ﷺ) was injured and some 70 of the committed and combatant Muslims with him were martyred. The inconclusive outcome of this military campaign caused the average Muslim to take a harder look at the quality of his relationship with the Prophet (ﷺ); that is, if Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) had given an order, then he should have been obeyed in a meticulous way; or else the consequences of disobeying could be catastrophic (as happened in Uḥud).

**Ḥunayn** – a valley situated about one-day's journey from Makkah where the Prophet (ﷺ), soon after the liberation of Makkah (8AH), defeated the alliance of forces around the tribe of Hawāzin.

556 A large part of *Sūrah Āl 'Imrān* is dedicated to the circumstances, details, and outcomes of the Battle of Uḥud; refer to Volume 4 of this *tafsīr*.

557 **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** – the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies (ICTs); the founding document of the ITU was the 1865 International Telegraph Convention. The ITU allocates global radio spectrum and satellite orbits, develops the technical standards that ensure networks and technologies seamlessly interconnect, and strives to improve access to ICTs to underserved communities worldwide. According to its mission, the ITU is committed



to connecting all the world's people, wherever they live and whatever their means. Through its work, it is supposed to protect and support everyone's fundamental right to communicate. In the modern world, as ICTs underpin almost all major civil and municipal functions from managing and controlling emergency services, water supplies, power networks, and food distribution chains, to supporting health care, education, government services, financial markets, transportation systems, and environmental management, the ITU is set up to bring the benefits of modern communication technolo-

gies to people everywhere in an efficient, safe, easy, and affordable manner. ITU membership includes public and private sector organizations, associations, and corporations: 193 member nations, ICT regulators, leading academic institutions, and some 700 private companies (source: <http://www.itu.int/en/about/Pages/overview.aspx>).

558 **Madison Avenue** – a street in Manhattan, New York City, New York, extending north to Harlem from Madison Square. With its glittering skyscrapers and expensive boutiques, it is regarded to be the hub of the advertising industry.

559 Dr. Sut Jhally, *Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse* (Amhearst, Massachusetts: sutjhally.com, 2005).  
<http://www.sutjhally.com/articles/advertisingattheed/>

560 **Estates of the Realm** – a hierarchical classification of society from European, and more particularly French, history. Claimed by those in power, especially in medieval Europe, to be ordained by God, the clergy, the nobility, and the commoners, in order of importance, were respectively the First, the Second, and the Third Estates. In the history of France before the French Revolution (1789–1799) — what was referred to as the Ancien Régime — society was divided into three tiers or estates. The First Estate consisted of the clergy, which was itself classified into the lower and the higher clergy, the latter consisting of members of the Second Estate, effectively clerical nobility. In pre-revolution France, the First Estate made up approximately 0.5% of the population, and its two constituents were granted immunity from paying any taxes.

The Second Estate comprised the French nobility and royalty, but did not include the king, whose position stood outside the system of estates. This estate was further subdivided into the “nobility of the robe,” those who administered civil government and official tribunals; and the “nobility of the sword,” those who occupied commanding positions in the military. Members of the Second Estate, making up about 2% of the French population, were exempt from manual labor, and most forms of taxation.

The Third Estate made up the balance of the people in French society, around 97% of the population. The bulk of taxation was applied to members of the Third Estate, hence the gestating antipathy toward members of the other two estates. Like the caste system in India, one was typically born into an estate and upward mobility from one estate to another was extremely rare, though in practice, mobility was typically restricted from the third to either of the two other estates. The other European domains at the same time of history (Russian, Scottish, British, Swedish, etc.) had not too dissimilar designations for the same tiers.

The so-called "Fourth Estate," a term often attributed to the conservative English philosopher Edmund Burke, refers to the media, or more precisely the power of the media to craft a narrative so as to influence (or pacify) the commoners into accepting their lot in life, and not challenging the inequities perpetuated by the power elite in society, usually the members of the first two estates. It is now considered to be an arm of government.

561 Predecessors of the modern newspaper included official information sheets, as in the Roman *Acta Diurna*, hung in public places, or the linguistic art of expression around the Ka'bah known as the *mu'allaqāt*, and medieval manuscript news pamphlets, printed in Germany and the Netherlands. The modern newspaper can be traced back to the British publications, the *Corante* (1621) and *Weekly News* (1622). Many publications were suppressed during the 17th century, but censorship was relaxed after the 1688 revolution. The first daily paper was the *Daily Courant* (1702), and the first true evening paper, the *Courier* (1792). The reign of George III was marked by bitter conflict over the freedom of the press, not least the reporting of speeches in the House of Commons. In the United States, the first newspapers (in Boston, 1689) avoided controversy, but the *Boston Gazette* and the *Massachusetts Spy* (1770) engaged in political debate.

In the 19th century, fast rotary presses, the advent of cheap paper, and the abolition of the Stamp Duty (1855), just to mention a small detail of the industry in the larger world, encouraged a great growth in publication. Technical improvements since then have successively brought in mechanized metal typesetting, photoengraved illustrations, photo-typesetting, offset lithography, facsimile transmission of text and pictures, and an overall digitization of the entire process from story gathering to publication. The revolution in news-gathering and editorial preparation has equaled the technical advances. Recent developments include the use of electronic databases, facilities for journalists to type stories straight into desktop computers, layout screens on which whole pages can be laid out and reviewed, and the inclusion of four-color illustrations and photographs. Newspaper design and marketing has seen rapid development in the 20th century, but it has also been accompanied by tabloid circulation wars, price competition, and a reduction in the number of newspapers published. In 1990, around 18,000 newspapers were being published around the world, with particularly important countries being Russia (over 4,800), India (over 2,000), the Ukraine (over 1,700), and the USA (over 1,600); Canada had around 110; the UK, 99; Australia, 71; and South Africa around 20.

562 Larry Kilman, *Print Screen: Newspapers are holding their own in the internet economy*. (Paris, France: OECD Observer No. 268, June, 2008).  
[http://www.oecdobserver.org/news/archivestory.php/aid/2679/Print\\_screen.html](http://www.oecdobserver.org/news/archivestory.php/aid/2679/Print_screen.html)

Sacha Wunsch-Vincent and Graham Vickery, *The Evolution of News and the Internet*. (Paris, France: OECD Committee for Information, Computer, and Communications Policy, December, 2009).  
<http://www.oecd.org/sti/ieconomy/45559596.pdf>

563 **First Amendment to the US Constitution** (proposed by Congress on September 25, 1789; ratified on December 15, 1791): Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

This is the opening passage of the US Bill of Rights, the source of those substantive rights fundamental to a free society — freedom of conscience and expression. The First Amendment prohibits Congress from establishing a religion, from interdicting the free exercise of religion, and from abridging the freedoms of speech, press, assembly, or petition. While the Amendment is specifically directed at Congress, all of its provisions have been made binding upon the states through Supreme Court interpretation of the due process clause of the 14th Amendment.

The First Amendment is viewed by most civil libertarians as containing the very essence of a free society. The surest limitation on potential or real tyrants is the exercise of the free conscience through the medium of religious expression, speech, and press. All other provisions of the Bill of Rights are more secure so long as people are free to speak or write about them and to seek redress of grievances through peaceful assembly and petition.

564 Narrated by Anas ibn Mālik and others; and recorded by al-Bukhārī, al-Tirmidhī, and Aḥmad ibn Hanbal.

انصُرْ أَهْلَكَ ظَلِيمًا أَوْ مَظْلُومًا. قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ . هَذَا أَنْصَرُهُ مَظْلُومًا فَكَيْفَ أَنْصَرُهُ ظَالِمًا؟ قَالَ تَكْفُهُ عَنِ الظُّلْمِ  
 فذالك نصرتك إِيَّاهُ.

565 **Anti-Semitism** – literally, prejudice against Semitic people; but in practice it has meant prejudice or discrimination against, and persecution of, the Jews as an ethnic group. Historically this was practiced for almost 2,000 years by European Christians, culminating with Hitler’s Germany, and the Holocaust (1933–1945), in which mainstream media accounts claim that several million Jews were killed in concentration camps and in local extermination pogroms, such as the siege of the Warsaw ghetto. In Eastern Europe, as well as in majority Muslim countries, the mainstream media project a prevalent “anti-Semitism.” In some places it takes the form of racism.



The destruction of Jerusalem in 70CE led many Jews to resettle in Europe and throughout the Roman Empire. In the 4th century, Christianity was adopted as the official religion of the Empire, which reinforced existing prejudices (dating back to pre-Christian times and referred to in the works of Seneca and Tacitus) against Jews who refused to convert. Anti-Semitism, as it is defined by Jewish-centered interests, increased in the Middle Ages because of the Crusades and the Inquisition, with legislation forbidding Jews from owning land or becoming members of a craft guild; to earn a living they had to become moneylenders and traders (and, we are told, were then resented when they prospered). Britain expelled many Jews (1290), but they were formally readmitted (1655) by Cromwell. From the 16th century, Jews were forced by law in many European cities to live in a separate area, or ghetto.

Late-18th- and early-19th-century liberal thought improved the position of Jews in European society. In the Austro-Hungarian Empire, for example, they were allowed to own land, and after the French Revolution, the "rights of man" were extended to French Jews (1790). The rise of 19th-century nationalism and unscientific theories of race instigated new resentments; hence anti-Semitism gained traction in Austria, France, and Germany, and from 1881, pogroms in Poland and Russia caused refugees to flee to the US (where freedom of religion was enshrined in the US Constitution), to the UK, and to other European countries as well as Palestine.

In the 20th century, fascism and the Nazi party's application of racial theories led to organized persecution and racial obliteration. After WWII, the forging of Israel (1948) provoked Palestinian anti-Zionism, officially backed by regimes in Arabian countries. Anti-Semitism, with its contemporary Israeli slant, may still be detected on the far right and the far left of the political spectrum.

566 See *āyah* 20:85.

567 **Ten Commandments (Decalogue)** – referred to in the Book of Deuteronomy (4:13; 10:4) as the Ten Words; fundamental laws proclaimed by God on Mt. Sinai and transmitted through Moses (ﷺ) to Israel. The Ten Commandments are regarded in Jewish literature as the fountainhead of all other laws. They are given in the Book of Exodus, 20:2–17, and repeated with slight variations in the Book of Deuteronomy, 5:6–21, the main difference between the two versions concerning the law of the Sabbath, which in Exodus is motivated by God's resting on the seventh day of creation, while in Deuteronomy, it is based on the deliverance from Egypt. The division into ten commandments is not apparent in the Hebrew original and the Christian tradition regarding this differs slightly at the outset from the Jewish one, maintaining that the first verse is not a commandment and dividing into two either the second or tenth commandment.

According to Jewish tradition, the first five commandments describe man's duties to God, the latter five his responsibilities to his fellow-man. Per the Israeli version of history, they were first written on two tablets of stone, which were broken by Moses (ﷺ) in his indignation over the worship of the golden calf. After Moses (ﷺ) re-ascended Mt. Sinai, he brought down a second set, which was placed in the Ark, henceforth known as the Ark of Testimony or the Ark of the Covenant. The Ten Commandments were recited daily in the Temple just before the Shema (a Hebrew text consisting of the three passages Deuteronomy, 6:4, 11:13–21; and Numbers, 15:37–41), forming an integral part of the morning service. The practice was, however, abolished when the Minim (sectarians) asserted that the Decalogue had been given solely to Moses (ﷺ) on Mt. Sinai. The fundamental importance of the Ten Commandments was emphasized by the rabbis and medieval Jewish philosophers.

568 **Sabbath** – the day of rest. The Jewish Sabbath is observed weekly from shortly before sunset on Friday until after nightfall on Saturday. The Friday night meal is preceded by Kiddush, recited over a cup of wine, in which the day is acknowledged to be a divine gift, a memorial of the creation of the world, and of the exodus from Egypt. There have been many attempts to discover a Babylonian origin for the Sabbath but it is the Jewish conception that has influenced the world. In the Ten Commandments, and in the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses – ﷺ) generally, the emphasis is on the Sabbath as a day of complete rest and abstention from work, “an everlasting sign between me and the Children of Israel that in six days the Lord created heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed” (Exodus, 31:17). Subsequently Jewish law has defined 39 separate types of action that constitute an infringement of the Sabbath and has also legislated extensively to enhance the positive character of the Sabbath rest.

Nevertheless, scripture itself prescribed the offering of sacrifices in the Temple on the Sabbath, despite the work involved (Numbers, 28:9–10). It is a cardinal rabbinic principle that if a human life is in danger (for instance, through illness), everything possible must be done even on the Sabbath to save it. Circumcisions are also performed if the eighth day happens to fall on the Sabbath. The prophets, like religious authorities of later times, complained of Sabbath desecration (see, for example, Jeremiah, 17:21–24; Ezekiel, 20:12–16), but they also expressed additional positive ideas for Sabbath observance.

The verse of Isaiah (58:13), “...and call the Sabbath a delight, and the holy of the Lord honorable...” is held to imply that, in order to honor the Sabbath, everyone, however wealthy or distinguished, should participate actively in the preparations for the day, should don clean attire to welcome it, and should make sure that in the home the table is laid and the Sabbath

lights are burning. By lighting a special Sabbath lamp or candles, the mistress of the house ushers in the Sabbath. To make the Sabbath delight, the finest food should be prepared, and where appropriate, the rabbis recommended that marital intercourse should be indulged in on Friday night. Although food cannot be freshly cooked on the Sabbath, full use should be made of permissible means of storing hot food and drink to ensure that all three meals of the day are thoroughly enjoyed. From ancient times, according to the testimony of Philo and Josephus, the Sabbath was regarded also as an occasion for spiritual and intellectual improvement, and study has always been a feature of the day's observance. The synagogue services, therefore, include readings from the Torah and the Prophets, and are followed generally by study of the Law, individually or in groups. After the termination of the Sabbath, a valedictory benediction called Havdalah is recited.

569 **Talmud** – a vast and varied work geared toward an understanding of a Jew's legal and moral responsibilities as set forth in the Bible and discussed, commented upon, and interpreted by rabbis and scholars over a period of about 700 years, roughly between 200BCE and 500CE. Almost every conceivable area of human interest is dealt with. Comprising more than 30 large volumes, the Talmud is a treasure-trove of ethics, religion, folklore, and jurisprudence. It ranks next to the sacred scriptures in significance as a source for religious insight, inspiration, and Jewish practice.

In early biblical Judaism, except for the Bible, there was a ban on committing to writing anything handed down by tradition. Scholarly discussions and opinions were transmitted by word of mouth, from scholar to disciple, teacher to pupil, father to son. Because it was transmitted orally, it was called the Oral Law, while that which was written down — the Bible — was called the Written Law. When the ban against committing the discussions, opinions, and commentaries to writing was lifted, the vast mountain of centuries of learning that had been transmitted by word of mouth was finally put into written form.

The **Mishnah**, a collection of Jewish legal material, is one part of the Talmud; the **Gemara**, or commentary of the Mishnah, is the other part. The Mishnah is divided into six sections, called Orders. They deal with (1) the laws of agriculture and prayers; (2) the laws of the Sabbath and the festivals; (3) the laws pertaining to marriage, divorce, and family relationships; (4) the civil and criminal statutes and court procedures; (5) the laws of sacrifice and the Temple cult; and (6) the laws of ritual uncleanness.

The Gemara proceeds by way of question and answer and generally follows the method of analogy and association. A discussion may thus cover a wide range of subjects and often end up with a completely different subject than it started with. Very seldom does the Talmud give a direct answer to a problem when there is a variety of opinions on a subject.

In the changing character of Judaism, the Talmud is the sequel to the Bible. The study of its contents has been the basis of Jewish religious life. Since the study of the Mishnah was actively pursued in two centers of learning, Palestine and Babylon, two Talmuds emerged, the Palestinian Talmud (sometimes referred to as the Jerusalem Talmud) and the Babylonian Talmud, with the latter being accepted as the authoritative one.

The text of the Talmud consists of some 2.5 million words, on 5,894 folio pages. Roughly one-third is Halakhah and two-thirds is Aggadah. Halakhah embraces two areas of prescribed conduct; one relates to the rules of ritual and religion, while the other pertains to the rights and obligations of people in civil society. Aggadah covers whatever is excluded from Halakhah, such as countless norms of conduct, which are deemed moral but unenforceable in courts of law; reflections on the cosmos and its Prime Mover; impressions of the character and manners of the rabbis of the Talmud; views on the economy of nature; scientific observations; passages illuminating the religious experience and social life of the Jews and their association with non-Jews; and much else.

570 **Toledot Yeshu** – Hebrew for *History of Jesus*; Hebrew work, dating from the early Middle Ages, that describes Jesus (✠) as the illegitimate son of one Joseph Pandera. The book relates that Jesus (✠) wrought miracles but was vanquished by an emissary of the rabbis and condemned to death by stoning. The dates do not correspond with those of Jesus of Nazareth (✠)!

571 The **New Testament** consists of the four canonical gospels of Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (narratives of the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus – ✠); the Acts of the Apostles (narrative of the Apostles' ministries in the early church, probably written by the author of the Gospel of Luke); the Epistles (21 letters written by various authors about Christian doctrine, theology, counsel, instruction, and conflict resolution); and the Book of Revelation (a book of Christian eschatology whose authorship is hotly contested; the book is generally rejected by the Eastern Orthodox Church).

The four canonical gospels give varying names of the 12 Apostles. According to St. Matthew, they were Peter, Andrew, James (the son of Zebedee), John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James (the son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot.

572 **synod** – historically, a council of a church, usually convened to decide an issue of doctrine, administration or application. In modern usage, the word often refers to the governing body of a particular church, whether its members are meeting or not. More particularly, in Roman Catholic usage, a *synod* (often synonymous with *council*) refers to an authoritative meeting of bish-

ops for the purpose of Church administration in the areas of teaching (faith and morals) or governance (Church discipline or law).

573 Glenn Davis, *The Development of the Canon of the New Testament: St. Justin Martyr*. (New Testament Canon website, 2008).  
[http://www.ntcanon.org/Justin\\_Martyr.shtml](http://www.ntcanon.org/Justin_Martyr.shtml)

Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance*. (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

Wilhelm Schneemelcher (editor), Robert McLachlan (editor of English translation), *New Testament Apocrypha, Volume 1: Gospels and Related Writings, Revised Edition*. (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989).

574 **Marcion** (reputed, 85–160CE) – founder of the Marcionite Church and compiler of an early New Testament canon. Born in Sinope, Asia Minor, probably of Christian parentage, Marcion became a rich shipowner and gave the congregation at Rome a large gift when he joined. Controversy arose when he rejected the Old Testament and preached against Rome's moral laxity. When excommunicated (around 144CE), he started his own church in Asia Minor.

Marcion was Gnostic (possessing intellectual or esoteric knowledge of spiritual things) in outlook, regarding this world and human affairs as evil. According to Marcion a *demiurge* (a subordinate deity) created this earth, not God; Jesus (✝) was not incarnate, he merely seemed to be human; and there was no resurrection as the body is evil. To him, salvation was spiritual liberation from this world, and hence, his followers rejected earthly things, festivities, marriage, meat, wine, and adornment. Only celibates were baptized. Marcion compiled a New Testament canon consisting of his own Antithesis (contrasting the Old Testament with the New Testament on love, justice, and so forth), an expurgated Gospel of Luke, and ten expurgated letters of St. Paul. He omitted what did not promote love. Marcionism flourished and rivaled Rome, but faded in the 5th century when Manichaeism was popular. Marcion forced the officials of Christianity to declare a canon and to compose the Apostle's Creed over and against Gnosticism.

575 **Tatian** (reputed, 110–172CE) – fervent Christian apologist against Greek philosophy; author of the *Diatessaron*, a harmony of the Four Gospels. Born in Assyria, a student of Greek philosophy, Tatian converted to Christianity while in Rome, probably between 150 and 165CE. He studied under Justin Martyr, most famous of the early Christian apologists. The *Diatessaron*, used in Syriac churches until the 5th century, testifies to the Four Gospels' early

significance. Tatian's only extant writing, *Address to the Greeks*, caustically derides Greek philosophy as conceited human opinion when compared to biblical revelation. He was passionately ascetic, yet upheld the Creation, the Incarnation, the Resurrection, and the Judgment.

576 **Papias** (reputed, 60–130CE) – Bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor, whose chief literary credit is his *Exposition of the Lord's Oracles* in five books, but only fragments remain, mainly in *Eusebius' Church History*. His testimony to the apostolic authorship of the Gospels is the subject of much dispute, and his worth as a historical source has been in contention since Eusebius' day. The latter had a low view of Papias' intelligence on account of his millenarian beliefs, which Eusebius discredited. More recently, biblical historians believe Papias was reacting to Marcion, a teacher who championed the Gospel of Luke. Papias evidently wanted to assert the authority of the other three Gospels as emanating from the Apostles or their close followers.

577 Lonsdale and Laura Ragg (translators), *The Gospel of Barnabas*. (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Saba Islamic Media Sdn. Bhd., 1998).

578 In biblical language, Zechariah and John (📖).

579 **Pontius Pilate** (dates of birth and death not known) – the discovery of an inscription at Caesarea on the coast of Palestine in 1961 has yielded verification of the historical figure otherwise known from the Gospels as Pontius Pilate, although his career is briefly mentioned by Tacitus, Josephus, and Philo. The four church-sanctioned gospels all agree on making him the decisive Roman figure at the trial of Jesus (📖), and there are occasional allusions to him in other New Testament books (Acts of the Apostles, 3:13, 4:27, 13:28; 1 Timothy, 6:13).

He came to his office as prefect of Judea in 26CE, and assumed large-scale military and judicial power as well as wielding authority over the Jewish leaders and the Temple treasury. His relations with the Jews were not congenial, and he constantly aggravated the situation, first by trying to introduce Roman military standards into the city, then by seeking to dedicate some golden shields in his Jerusalem residence. On both counts he was defeated and forced to back down. When he tried to use Temple money to finance an aqueduct to bring water to Jerusalem, his action led to resistance and bloodshed (Luke, 13:1).

According to the Christian version of history, at the trial of Jesus (📖), Pilate was confronted with a political allegation, which he took seriously, but he vacillated because his position at Rome was tenuous, following the loss of his patron Sejanus in 31CE. The emperor Tiberius was pro-Jewish, and Pilate had no wish to offend him. His final year saw his disgrace in Judea and

recall to Rome, where he died, leaving a memory in the Apostles' Creed (Catholic Church version):

I believe in God,  
 the Father almighty,  
 Creator of heaven and earth,  
 and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
 born of the Virgin Mary,  
*suffered under Pontius Pilate,*  
 was crucified, died and was buried;  
 he descended into hell;  
 on the third day he rose again from the dead;  
 he ascended into heaven,  
 and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;  
 from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
 I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
 the holy catholic Church,  
 the communion of saints,  
 the forgiveness of sins,  
 the resurrection of the body,  
 and life everlasting.  
 Amen.

580 **passion narratives** – those parts of the four canonical gospels of the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) that describe Jesus' (ﷺ) triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, the Agony in the Garden, his arrest, trial, and then execution by crucifixion.

581 The three prophecies according to the Gospel of Mark (King James Version):

And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again (Mark, 8:31).

For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day (Mark, 9:31).

And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, saying, Behold, we go up to

Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: and they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again (Mark, 10:32–34).

582 Refer also to the following verse from the Gospel of Mark (Revised Standard Version), “And they [Jewish authorities] tried to arrest him, but feared the multitude, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them...” (Mark, 12:12).

**Pharisees** – Jewish religious and political party during the Second Temple Period (530BCE–70CE). Their origin, like that of other contemporaneous parties, is unknown; probably they represent a continuation of the Hasideans. Although a relatively narrow body, closed to the masses, their activity was directed to the masses whom they sought to imbue with a spirit of holiness by propagating traditional religious teaching. The gulf between the Pharisees and those ignorant of the Law or not practicing it was complete. The Pharisees used to eat in groups and observe all the rules of purity in the same manner as the priests consuming consecrated food in the Temple. They endeavored to extend their influence over the Temple at the expense of the Sadducees, whose control there was absolute. In addition, they incorporated into their cult folk-customs not mentioned in the Bible (for example, the Water-Drawing Festival), to the dismay of the Sadducees.

The antagonism between the two parties extended to many spheres, which some scholars attribute to basic social differences; generally, the Pharisees admitted the principle of evolution in their legal decisions, while the Sadducees were incapable of adaptation to a changing environment. The Pharisees were thus generally lenient in their interpretations, while the Sadducees clung to the letter of the written text. The Pharisees placed the nation’s life within a *halakhic* framework expressed in the Oral Law, which they regarded as no less vital than the Written Law (the Bible). Their doctrine aspired to embrace the entire life of the community, touching therefore on the theological foundations of life, questions of fate, good and evil, the immortality of the soul, and eschatology (the branch of theology that is concerned with such final things as death and judgment). They admitted divine predestination but also man’s responsibility for his deeds.

In contrast to the Sadducees, they believed in life after death, the resurrection of the dead, the advent of the Messiah, and the Day of Judgment. Not all Pharisees lived up to their high principles, and the Talmud itself lists seven hypocritical types. Nevertheless, in reality, they were far removed from the derogatory picture painted by the New Testament. In fact, Pharisaism was responsible for strengthening morality and introducing the elas-



ticity that enabled Judaism to withstand its subsequent tribulations; the movement was continued in the stream of historic Judaism.

583 Dr. Gerd Lüdemann, *Some Critical Comments on Mel Gibson's movie, The Passion of Christ, in the Light of Historical Criticism*. (The Bible and Interpretation website, March, 2004)  
[http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/Ludemann\\_Passion.shtml](http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/Ludemann_Passion.shtml)

584 **Barabbas** – Political rebel and murderer (as described in Mark, 15; Luke, 23) who was arrested but apparently released by popular acclaim in preference to Pilate's offer to release Jesus of Nazareth (Ἰησοῦς). He was possibly also called "Jesus Barabbas" (in some manuscripts of Matthew, 27:16–17, such as the Common English Bible).

585 The Parable of the Vineyard or the Parable of the Wicked Tenants according to the Gospel of Mark (King James Version):

- 1 And he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.
- 2 And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.
- 3 And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty.
- 4 And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled.
- 5 And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.
- 6 Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.
- 7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.
- 8 And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.
- 9 What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.
- 10 And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:
- 11 This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?
- 12 And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way (Mark, 12:1–12).

586 Dr. Gerd Lüdemann, *Some Critical Comments on Mel Gibson's movie.*  
[http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/Ludemann\\_Passion.shtml](http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/Ludemann_Passion.shtml)

587 Ibid.

**Judas Iscariot** (1st century CE) – one of the 12 disciples of Jesus (✝), usually appearing last in the lists of the synoptic Gospels (Mark, 3:19); identified as the one who betrayed Jesus (✝) to the Jewish authorities for 30 pieces of silver by helping to arrange for his arrest at Gethsemane (Mark, 14:43–46). Other traditions indicate his role as treasurer (John, 13:29) and his later repentance and suicide (Matthew, 27:3–10; Acts of the Apostles, 1:16–20).

588 Ibid.

589 Ibid.

590 Ibid.

591 Ibid.

**Gaius Julius Caesar** (100–44BCE) – Roman politician of patrician origins but slender means, whose military genius, as displayed in the Gallic Wars (58–51BCE), enabled Rome to extend her empire permanently to the Atlantic seaboard, but whose ruthless ambition led to the breakdown of the Republican system of government at home. Never one to allow himself to be impeded by constitutional niceties, in 60BCE he joined with Pompey and Crassus (the so-called Triumvirate) to protect his interests in the state, and in 49BCE, to avoid being humbled by his enemies at Rome, he led his army across the Rubicon River into Italy and plunged the state into civil war. Victory over the Pompeian forces at Pharsalus (48BCE), Zela (47BCE), Thapsus (46BCE), and Munda (45BCE) left him in sole control at Rome.

He did not disguise his absolute power, taking the title *Dictator for Life* in 44BCE and allowing himself to be paid extravagant honors, which suggested he was aiming at regal and even divine status. This was too much for many republican-minded Romans, and under the leadership of Brutus and Cassius they conspired to murder him. His brief period in power left him with little time to carry out the many social, economic, and administrative reforms he had intended. It was left to his great-nephew and heir, Octavian (the future Emperor Augustus), to reap what he had sown, and also to learn from his mistakes.

592 Ibid.

**Herod Antipas** (21BCE–39CE) – Tetrarch (governor) of the Roman province of Galilee, North Palestine (4BCE–9CE); son of Herod the Great. Herod Antipas divorced his wife to marry his niece Herodias, who persuaded her daughter Salome to ask for John the Baptist's (ﷺ) head when he reproved Herod's marriage. Jesus (ﷺ) was brought before him on Pontius Pilate's discovery that the former was a Galilean and hence of Herod's jurisdiction, but Herod returned him without giving any verdict. In 38CE Herod Antipas went to Rome to try to persuade Emperor Caligula to give him the title of king, but was instead banished.

593 Ibid.

594 Ibid.

**Synoptic Gospels** – refers to the Gospels of Saints Mark, Matthew, and Luke because they include many of the same stories, often in the same sequence, and similar wording. Biblical scholars consider these three gospels to be closely linked in that they share the same point of view.

**Sanhedrin** (2nd century BCE – 1st century CE) – ancient supreme court in Jerusalem headed by the Jewish high priest. Its functions were judicial, administrative, and religious. The Great Sanhedrin was purely religious and continued on in Europe until about 450CE as the rabbinic patriarchate.

595 Ibid.

**Annas** (1st century CE) – Israel's high priest, appointed in 6CE and deposed by the Romans in 15CE, but still described later as "high priest" in the New Testament. Annas apparently questioned Jesus (ﷺ) after his arrest (John, 18), and St. Peter after his detention (Acts of the Apostles, 4). His other activities are described in the works of Flavius Josephus.

**Caiaphas** – a Jewish high priest for about 18 years from roughly 18–36CE. The Gospels and Book of Acts of the Apostles mention Caiaphas as high priest in Jesus' (ﷺ) trial (Matthew, 26:57–27:2; Mark, 14:53–15:1; Luke, 22:54–23:1), and the trial of the apostles (Acts of the Apostles, 5:12–42). The text relates Caiaphas to Annas, high priest from about 6–15CE; precisely what that relation was cannot now be determined. John, 18:13 states that Annas was Caiaphas' father-in-law and that, after Jesus' (ﷺ) arrest, he was taken first to Annas, before Caiaphas had an opportunity to examine him. Annas had been deposed by the Romans in 15CE, but may have continued to exercise powerful influence. Caiaphas, his five sons, and one grandson of Annas, were in the succession of high priests. Thus, when, as in Acts of the

Apostles, 4:6, Annas is called “the high priest,” it may be a recognition of his de facto political power, an honorary rather than a legal title (Luke, 3:2; John, 18:19).

When Saul was sent to Damascus to persecute the Christians, he went with letters to the synagogues there from “the high priest” in Jerusalem (Acts of the Apostles, 9:2, 22:5, 26:12). The high priest then in office was Caiaphas, who was unaware of the role he played in the conversion of Saul (who ultimately became St. Paul). Nothing further is known concerning Caiaphas, except that in some Christian circles a legend arose that he became a Christian!

596 Ibid.

597 **St. Joseph of Arimathea:**

William H. Gentz (general editor), *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*. (Nashville, Tennessee: Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches in the USA, 1973), p. 552.

Dr. Robert Mock, *The Jewish Refugees Flee to the Isle of Avalon: the Divine Mission to Restore the Lost Sheep (Tribes) of the House of Israel*. (BibleResearchers.com website, January, 2009).  
<http://www.biblesearchers.com/hebrewchurch/primitive/losttribes/israel2.shtml>

Joseph of Arimathea was a rich, 1st-century Israeli who became a secret disciple of Jesus (✝) and a councillor in Jerusalem. After the crucifixion, he went to Pontius Pilate and begged him for Jesus' (✝) body, burying it in his own rock-hewn tomb (Mark, 15:42–47). He is frequently referred to in later Christian literature, such as the Gospel of Nicodemus. According to legend, he was sent by Philip (the Apostle) to Glastonbury, England (of which he is patron); and also when he was in prison, he was given the Holy Grail by Jesus (✝) himself.

**Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullian** (155–222CE) – Carthaginian father of the church, the first major Christian writer who wrote in Latin; he became a leading exponent of Montanism.

**Origen** (186–254CE) – Christian biblical scholar and leading theologian of Alexandria, Egypt, who became head of the catechetical school in Alexandria. He was a layman until 230CE, when he was ordained as presbyter (elder) in Palestine. Exiled from Alexandria by bishop Demetrius, he established a new school in Caesarea. He was imprisoned during the persecution under Decius in 250CE, and died soon afterward. His writings were original,

learned, and prolific, but his views on the unity of God among other things were condemned by Church councils in the 5th and 6th centuries.

598 William H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, p. 552.

599 Ibid.

600 Ibid.

601 Ibid.

602 **logos** – Greek for *word*; a term in Greek, Hebrew, and Christian philosophy and theology. It was used by Greek philosophers as the embodiment of “reason” in the universe. Under Greek influence, the Jews came to conceive of “wisdom” as an aspect of God’s activity. The Jewish philosopher Philo (1st century CE) attempted to reconcile Platonic, Stoic, and Hebrew philosophy by identifying the logos with the Jewish idea of “wisdom.” Several of the New Testament writers took over Philo’s conception of the *logos*, which they identified with Christ and hence with the second person of the trinity.

603 **Socrates** (469–399BCE) – Greek philosopher, born in Athens, where he spent his whole life. He wrote nothing, but his personality and beliefs were immortalized in the dialogues of his pupil Plato. His pivotal influence was such that all earlier Greek philosophy is classified as pre-Socratic, and he was central to the decisive shift of philosophical interest from the natural world and cosmology to ethics and conceptual analysis.

The Socratic method was applied in sustained philosophical conversations with fellow citizens, in particular the politicians and celebrities of the day. He would ask for definitions of familiar concepts such as justice, courage, and piety; elicit contradictions in the confident responses of his interlocutors; and thus demonstrate the need for a deeper and more honest analysis. His own profession of ignorance was probably ironic, as Plato ascribes to him the doctrines that human excellence is a kind of knowledge; that all wrongdoing is therefore based on ignorance; that no one desires what is bad; and that it is worse to do injustice than to suffer it. His unpopular activities no doubt contributed to the demands for his conviction for “impiety” and “corrupting the youth”; he was tried at the age of 70 and sentenced to death by drinking hemlock (a highly poisonous European plant of the parsley family).

**Heraclitus** – Greek philosopher, born in Ephesus; flourished around 500BCE. He wrote a book, of which only fragments remain, and became known as the “obscure” and the “riddler” because of his oracular (ambiguous) style. His

most famous doctrine is that everything is in a state of flux (“...you can never step into the same river twice...”). The apparent stability and unity of the world conceals a dynamic tension between opposites, which is somehow measured and controlled by reason (*logos*) or its physical manifestation, fire. Fire is the ultimate constituent of the world, and the fire of the human soul is thus linked to the cosmic fire that virtuous souls eventually join.

604 **Stoicism** – comes from the Greek word *stoa* for *porch*; Greek school of philosophy, founded about 300BCE by Zeno of Citium. The stoics were pantheistic materialists who believed that happiness lay in accepting the law of the universe. They emphasized human brotherhood, denounced slavery, and were internationalists. The name is derived from the porch on which Zeno taught. In the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE, Stoics took a prominent part in Greek and Roman revolutionary movements. After the 1st century BCE, Stoicism became the philosophy of the Roman ruling class and lost its revolutionary significance; outstanding Stoics of this period were Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius Antoninus.

605 **logic** – from the Latin word *logica*. In common usage, the term refers to a proper or reasonable way of thinking about or understanding something, or a particular way of thinking about something. However, as a discipline or field of knowledge, *logic* refers to a normative study of reasoning, featuring most prominently in philosophy and mathematics. Depending on the particular civilizational impact on problem solving approaches — African, Greek, Chinese, Persian, Indian, Islamic — the logical method has taken different forms. In the West, logic as a discipline is usually traced to Aristotle, and is often subdivided into deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning, and abductive reasoning.

Deductive reasoning links premises with conclusions; the structure of reasoning in this approach goes from a set of general statements (premises and/or observations) to a logically certain conclusion; hence if the premise(s) is accepted as valid, then it follows that the conclusion is also valid. Typically deductive reasoning can be challenged at the level of the opening premise, which if proved to be invalid, disproves the conclusion. Inductive reasoning contrasts with deductive reasoning in that a set of specific, but comparable, observations lead to a general conclusion or rule, with such a conclusion being probable, but not necessarily certain. Unlike deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning allows for the possibility that the conclusion is false, even if all the observations are true. Thus an inductive argument is either strong or weak, but not valid or invalid (certain or uncertain). Abductive reasoning, in a sense, refers to “backing out” a premise from a known conclusion. Or in other words, the premise is inferred as an explanation for the conclusion, which is known. Unlike deductive reasoning,

which yields a definitive conclusion, abductive reasoning does not guarantee a conclusion, but an inference to the best explanation of the conclusion.

606 **Plato** (428–347BCE) – Greek philosopher, probably born in Athens of an aristocratic family. Little is known of his early life, but he was a devoted disciple of Socrates. He traveled widely; then in about 367BCE, he founded his Academy at Athens, where Aristotle was his most famous pupil. He remained there for the rest of his life, apart from visits to Syracuse, where he was involved in political experiments. His 30 or more dialogues are conventionally divided into three periods.

The early dialogues have Socrates as the principal character engaged in ironic and inconclusive interrogations about the definition of different moral virtues (piety in the *Euthyphro*, courage in the *Laches*, and so on). In the middle, highly literary dialogues, such as the *Symposium*, *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, and *Republic*, he increasingly develops his own positive doctrines, such as the theory of knowledge as recollection, the immortality of the soul, the tripartite division of the soul, and above all, the theory of forms (or *ideas*), which contrasts the transient, material world of “particulars” (objects merely of perception, opinion, and belief) with the timeless, unchanging world of universals or forms (the true objects of knowledge). The *Republic* also describes Plato’s celebrated political utopia, ruled by philosopher-kings who have mastered the discipline of *dialectic*. The third group of later dialogues (including *Parmenides*, *Theaetetus*, and *Sophist*) represents a series of highly sophisticated criticisms of the metaphysical and logical assumptions of his middle period, and contain some of his most demanding and original work. Taken as a whole, his philosophy has been so enormously influential that the whole subsequent Western tradition was described by some as a series of “footnotes to Plato.”

**Aristotle** (384–322BCE) – Greek philosopher, scientist, and physician; one of the greatest figures in the history of Western thought; born in Stagira, Macedonia. In 367BCE, he went to Athens, where he was associated with Plato’s Academy until Plato’s death in 347BCE. He then spent time in Asia Minor and in Mytilene (on Lesbos). In 342BCE he was invited by Philip of Macedon to educate his son, Alexander (later, the Great). He returned to Athens (335BCE) and opened a school (the Lyceum); his followers were called Peripatetics, supposedly from his practice of walking up and down restlessly during his lectures. After Alexander’s death (323BCE), there was strong anti-Macedonian sentiment in Athens; Aristotle was accused of impiety and, perhaps with Socrates’ fate in mind, escaped to Chalcis in Euboea, where he died the next year.

Aristotle’s writings represented an enormous, encyclopedic output over virtually every field of knowledge: logic, metaphysics, ethics, politics, rhetor-

ric, poetry, biology, zoology, physics, and psychology. The bulk of the work that survives actually consists of unpublished material in the form of lecture notes or students' textbooks; but even this incomplete corpus is extraordinary for its range, originality, systematization, and sophistication. His work exerted an enormous influence on medieval philosophy (especially through St. Thomas Aquinas), Islamic philosophy (especially through Ibn Rushd, also known as Averroes), and indeed on the whole Western intellectual and scientific tradition. The works most read today include the *Metaphysics* (the book written after the *Physics*), *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Politics*, *Poetics*, *De anima* and the *Organon* (treatises on logic).

607 The Euro-Americans do not want this period to be recognized as an Islamic period of intellectual ferment, so they call it medieval.

608 **Rene Descartes** (1596–1650) – French philosopher, inventor of analytical geometry. His philosophic aim was to unify all science by means of the appropriate single method — namely that of geometry, which possessed the required properties of clarity and simplicity. His influence has spread throughout modern philosophy, to both the rationalist and the empiricist. In *Discourse on Method* (1637) he set out his basic theory: that the method for the proper guidance of reason is the systematic doubt of everything until one arrives at clear and simple ideas that are beyond doubt. In this, the one fundamental certainty is reached, in his famous words, “*Cogito ergo sum*: I think therefore I am.”



**John Locke** (1632–1704) – English philosopher whose theory of knowledge greatly influenced the development of the British empiricist tradition. In *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), he discounted philosophical speculation as a source of knowledge, stating that this must proceed from experience, as in the scientific method. The philosopher's task was to examine the scope and nature of understanding. Consummately a philosopher of common sense, Locke argued against absolutism in politics, his covert target being the Stuart monarchy, but his insistence on tolerance excluded Catholicism. He distrusted religious and political fanaticism (or enthusiasm, as it was called), seeing political power as sanctioned by social contract. See also **Endnote 320** in Volume 7.



**Gottfried Leibniz** (1646–1716) – German philosopher, mathematician, historian and physicist. His main contribution to mathematics was the inven-



tion of differential calculus, although his claim to be the first to do so was disputed by Newton. In Leibniz's extensive philosophic work, he saw the world made up of a hierarchy of simple, self-contained and mutually mirroring units (monads), with the universe as an organic whole, its logical organization reflected in its greatest and smallest parts. He also sought to establish a universal and perfectly logical language, in which true propositions are at once seen as such, and false ones seen as absurd.



609 Refers to the US-Saudi-Israeli-backed coup (2013) by the Egyptian military against the first elected government of modern Egypt, and its president, Mohamed Mursi. The elected president along with the elected members of the Muslim Brotherhood, not to mention influential members of the organization who held no political office, were rounded up and thrown in prison, awaiting trial on trumped-up charges, which in any event amount to nothing compared to the crimes committed by the coup handlers and their powerful international enablers. As all criminal dictators are wont to do in the modern era, the coup leader, General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi (technically, a Sephardic Jew of Moroccan origin, whose uncle sat in the Israeli Knesset as a member of then ruling party, Mapai), had his kangaroo courts declare the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization, so as to justify its bitter persecution at the hands of a US-trained and equipped military.

Ayman Ahmed, 'What went wrong in Egypt', *Crescent International* 42(6) (August 2013), pp. 9–11.

Ayman Ahmed, 'Military pushes Egypt toward civil war', *Crescent International* 42(7) (September 2013), pp. 9–11.

Zafar Bangash, 'Why the Saudis are financing the coup in Egypt', *Crescent International* 42(7) (September 2013), pp. 11–13.

Abu Dharr, 'And the truth shall set you free', *Crescent International* 42(7) (September 2013), pp. 5–6.

610 As mentioned earlier, there are exceptions to this from within the Jewish context: Jews in the first generation of Muslims in Arabia who saw the light and made the transition from Judaism to Islam ('Abdullāh ibn Sallām and Mukhayrīq ibn al-Naḍīr). And nowadays there are some Jews who express their willingness to live in an Islamic society in Palestine after Zionist Israel is dismantled, such as the Naturei Karta.<sup>a</sup>

- a **Naturei Karta** – Aramaic for *Guardians of the City*; group of Orthodox Jewish devotees, chiefly drawn from the “old yishuv” in al-Quds (Jerusalem). They oppose political Zionism, object to all public cooperation with non-Orthodox Jews, and refuse to recognize the State of Israel. Its outlook has been current in Palestine and some parts of the Diaspora for several generations. Originally part of Agudat Israel, they seceded in 1937, and the difference between the two was accentuated when Agudat Israel accepted the State of Israel in 1948. Until 1965, the leader of the Naturei Karta was **Amram Blau**.



- 611 **St. Paul the Apostle** (5–circa 67CE) – originally Saul of Tarsus; advocate to the Gentiles and important theologian of the early Christian church, born of Jewish parents at Tarsus, Cilicia. He reputedly trained as a rabbi in Jerusalem, becoming a fervent Pharisee and persecutor of Christians. On his way to Damascus (around 33CE), he was, it is said, converted to Christianity by a vision of Christ. After several months in Nabatea, he began to preach the Christian message and undertake missionary journeys, first to Cyprus, and then to Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. Somewhere between 49–51CE, he, it is narrated, had to address an apostolic conference in Jerusalem on the disputed issue of how Gentiles and Jews were to be admitted to the Church (Galatians, 2:1–10; Acts of the Apostles, 15:1–21), and a form of resolution was apparently reached that allowed him to continue his mission to the Gentiles, although a later dispute with St. Peter did arise in Antioch.

The precise chronology of his missionary activities is confused, but other journeys took St. Paul, with Silvanus (Silas), to Asia Minor and through Galatia and Phrygia to Macedonia and Achaia, where in Corinth he was especially successful. An extensive mission was also undertaken in Ephesus, amid many difficulties, leading eventually to a final visit to Macedonia and Corinth. On his return to Jerusalem, he was apparently imprisoned for two years, following disturbances against him by the Jews. He was transferred to Caesarea and to Rome after appealing to Caesar; and according to later tradition, he was executed by Nero (although some traditions suggest that he was released and went to Spain). Thirteen New Testament letters are traditionally attributed to him, as well as some extracanonical works.

- 612 William H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, pp. 1066–67.

**Christology** – the branch of Christian theology relating to the person, nature, and role of Christ.

613 Ibid.

**Pentecost** – refers either to the Jewish feast of Shabuoth (the Feast of Weeks), or to a festival day in the Christian calendar, some 50 days after Jesus' (ﷺ) "death" and "resurrection" (seven weeks after Easter Sunday), commemorating the event when, according to Church belief, the Holy Spirit was said to have come upon Jesus' (ﷺ) apostles in Jerusalem, enabling them to "speak in other tongues" to those present (Acts of the Apostles, 2). This, according to the Bible, occurred on the Jewish feast of Pentecost (Acts, 2:1). In the English Church, this day is sometimes called "Whitsunday." The term *Pentecost* may also be used for the entire period between Easter Sunday and Pentecost Sunday.

614 Ibid.

615 Ibid.

**epistle** – in the New Testament, any of the 21 letters to individuals or to the members of various churches written by Christian leaders, including the 13 written by St. Paul. The term also describes either a letter with a suggestion of pomposity and literary affectation, or a letter addressed to someone in the form of a poem, as in the Epistles of Horace and Pope.

616 Ibid.

617 Ibid.

**Council of Nicaea (325CE)** – in the early 4th century, the civil and religious peace of the Roman empire in the East was threatened by the preaching of an itinerant priest from Alexandria, Egypt named Arius. He taught that Christ, though part-divine, was neither equal to nor eternal with God the Father. To combat this heresy, Constantine I, Roman emperor from 306–337CE, called a council of bishops from both East and West — the first ecumenical council in the history of the church — at which the chief opponent of Arius was Athanasius, later recognized as one of the Four Doctors, or Fathers, of the Eastern Church.

The Council made belief in the co-substance of God the Father and God the Son a test of Christian faith, the first such universal statement of Christian doctrine. Arius and two bishops who refused to accept the dogma were banished to Illyricum, more or less the region known today as the Balkan states.

The Nicene Creed ("I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth...") was formulated not at Nicaea but at the ecumenical

Council of Constantinople in 381CE. After that date, Arianism rapidly expired in the East, though it lived on among North Africans in the West until the advent of Islam. See also Endnote 121 in Volume 3; and p. 217, and Endnotes 80, 81, and 117 in Volume 4.

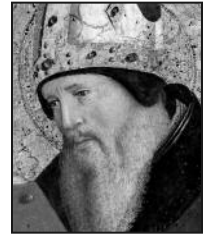
**St. Athanasius** (circa 296–373CE) – Christian innovator, born in Alexandria, Egypt. A historic participant at the Council of Nicaea (325CE), he was chosen Patriarch of Alexandria and Primate of Egypt. He led the opposition to the doctrines of Arianism, for which he was dismissed from his see (seat of authority of a bishop or archbishop) on several occasions by emperors sympathetic to the Arian cause. However, after his death, his teaching was supported at the Council of Constantinople (381CE). His writings include works on the trinity, the incarnation, and the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

618 Ibid.

619 Ibid.

620 Ibid.

**St. Augustine of Hippo** (354–430CE) – by some accounts, the most outstanding theologian in Christian antiquity, who successfully welded New Testament thought with Neoplatonism. Born in Africa, he was baptized a Christian at Milan in 387CE and spent the remainder of his life at Hippo (now ‘Annābah in Algeria), first as a hermit, then as a bishop. Even though Christian evangelicalism had a triumphant 3rd century, in which the church-approved narratives of the Gospel had been carried as far as Ethiopia, the church was in danger from what was called the Arian heresy, which was the faith of the Gothic peoples of Italy, Gaul, and Spain, and from other “heresies” as well. Moreover, some men blamed the church for the difficulties facing the empire.



The sack of Rome in 410CE was a grave shock. In response to it, St. Augustine wrote what some would consider the greatest book of early Christianity, *The City of God*, with the subtitle, *Against the Pagans*. The events of 410CE, he wrote, were God’s punishment of sinful man. There were two cities, the earthly city of man’s lower nature and the heavenly city of God. The heavenly city was attainable by anyone who followed the church’s teachings. St. Augustine believed that the church was a new factor in history, transforming it and opening up a new destiny for man. The state, too, had a place in the divine scheme of things, and Christian government was divinely ordained. Its purpose, like that of the church, was to fight for good

against evil. These were the ideas that laid the foundation for the future of European "Christianity." Refer also to **Endnote 28** in Volume 4; and pp. 321–23 and **Endnote 411** in Volume 7.

**St. Basil** (circa 329–379CE) – known as "the Great"; considered by many Christians to be one of the greatest of the Greek fathers, born in Caesarea, Cappadocia. After living a monastic life, in 370CE he succeeded Eusebius as Bishop of Caesarea. Along with his brother, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. Gregory of Nazianzus, he defended Christian philosophy against Arianism.

621 Ibid.

**Plotinus** (circa 205–270CE) – Greek philosopher who founded Neoplatonism; probably born in Egypt of Roman parentage. He studied in Alexandria and Persia, and in 244CE settled in Rome where he became a popular lecturer, advocating asceticism and the contemplative life. At the age of 60, he tried unsuccessfully to found in Campania a "Platonopolis" modeled on Plato's utopian Republic. His prolific writings were posthumously edited and arranged by his pupil Porphyry into "six groups of nine books" (or Enneads). They established the foundations of Neoplatonism as a philosophical system, which combined Platonic with Pythagorean, Aristotelian, and Stoic doctrines — and greatly influenced early "Christian" theology.

622 Ibid.

623 Kenneth R. Samples, *Thinking About the Trinity: One What and Three Whos*. (Corvina, California: Reasons to Believe website, July 1, 2000).  
<http://www.reasons.org/articles/thinking-about-the-trinity-one-what-and-three-whos>

624 Linguistically, before the Qur'an was revealed, the Arabic word *'iṣmah* was understood to mean *protection* (from something) or *safeguarding* (against something). However, the Qur'anic use of an active form of the word (*ya'ṣimuka*), "...*wa-allāhu ya'ṣimuka min al-nās: ...and Allah safeguarded you [O Muhammad] in contradistinction to [the rest of] humanity [which characteristically falls into sin]*" (5:67), expanded the range of its meaning. Consequently, with Allah's (ﷻ) protection from that which normally afflicts human nature (to err, to make mistakes, to sin), *'iṣmah* also took on the attendant meaning of *innocence-cum-impeccability*, without losing its original intent of safeguarding against something harmful. The word's derivative, *ma'ṣūm*, refers to someone who or something that is *safeguarded*, for instance, *one who is innocent-cum-impeccable* (such as a prophet).

625 The 12 imams of the Ja'farī *madhhab*, with title:

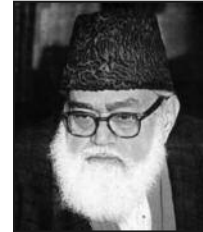
1. 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (23BH–40AH) – Amīr al-Mu'minīn, al-Murtaḍā
2. Al-Ḥasan ibn Alī (3–50AH) – al-Mujtabā
3. Al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī (4–61AH) – Sayyid al-Shuhadā'
4. 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (38–95AH) – al-Sajjād, Zayn al-Ābidīn
5. Muḥammad ibn 'Alī (57–114AH) – Bāqir al-'Ulūm
6. Ja'far ibn Muḥammad (83–148AH) – al-Ṣādiq
7. Mūsā ibn Ja'far (128–183AH) – al-Kāzīm
8. 'Alī ibn Mūsā (148–203AH) – al-Riḍā
9. Muḥammad ibn 'Alī (195–220AH) – al-Taqī, al-Jawwād
10. 'Alī ibn Muḥammad (212–254AH) – al-Hādī, al-Naqī
11. Ḥasan ibn 'Alī (232–260AH) – al-'Askarī
12. Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan (255–??AH) – al-Mahdī, al-Ḥujjah

626 Narrated by Anas ibn Mālik and recorded by al-Bukhārī.

جاء ثلاثٌ رهطٍ إلى بُيوتِ أزواجِ النبيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عليه وسلَّمَ . يسألونَ عن عِبادَةِ النبيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عليه وسلَّمَ . فلما أخبروا كأنهم تَقَالُوها . فقالوا: أين نحن منَ النبيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عليه وسلَّمَ؟ قد غَفَرَ اللهُ له ما تَقَدَّمَ مِن دُنْيِهِ وما تَأَخَّرَ . قال أحدهم: أما أنا فإني أصلي الليلَ أبداً . وقال آخرُ: أنا أصومُ الدهرَ ولا أفطرُ . وقال آخرُ: أنا أعتزلُ النساءَ فلا أتزوِّجُ أبداً . فجاء رسولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عليه وسلَّمَ فقال: أنتُم الذين قلتم كذا وكذا؟ أما واللهِ إني لأخشاكم لله وأتقاكم له . لكني أصومُ وأفطرُ . وأصلي وأرقدُ . وأتزوِّجُ النساءَ . فَمَن رَغِبَ عن سُنَّتِي فليس مِنِّي.

627 **Ḥurūb al-Riddah (Wars of Renunciation)** – refer to pp. 464, 470, and End-notes 383 and 407 in Volume 7.

628 **Sayyid Abū al-A'lá Mawdūdī (1903–1979)** – journalist, teacher, political philosopher, self-taught Islamic scholar, and founder of the political party and Islamic revival movement, Jamaat-e Islami; the most prolific Islamic writer of the last 150 years, writing literally hundreds of articles, papers, books, and explanations. Born in Aurangabad, British India, the only formal education he received was in secondary school and a short stint at the



Dar al-'Ulūm in Hyderabad, from where he had to withdraw due to the death of his father and lack of funds. He founded Jamaat-e Islami in India (1941) largely in response to the fact that the Muslims there had no idea about how to govern themselves, or how to achieve a situation in which they would be in charge of their own destiny. Under the aegis of this consideration, he opposed the establishment of Pakistan because he felt that the secular leaders of the Muslim League had no qualifications to run an Islamic state. After the inevitable partition of India took place (1947), Mawdūdī moved to Pakistan and struggled to try to reformulate the country into an Islamic state. For this, he was subjected to frequent arrests and long periods of incarceration, including a death sentence, which was ultimately commuted.

The concept of the modern Islamic state is attributable to Mawdūdī. In his book, *The Islamic Law and Constitution* (1941), he created a vision of what an Islamic state would look like in the 20th century, and he resuscitated the use of certain Islamic terminology — *ḥukm*, *ḥākimiyyah*, and *khilāfah* — that had been in stasis for the better part of 13 centuries, giving some Islamic movements in the Arab world, like al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn and Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr, much-needed inspiration at the political, theoretical, and ideological level. With these and others being some of the more dominant Islamic movements and leaders, it is safe to say that Mawdūdī was the forerunner of the modern Islamic movement. During his intermittent sojourns in prison, Mawdūdī started his explanation of the Qur'an, *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān (Towards Understanding the Qur'an)*, which he completed in 1972.

A scholar and thinker confident in his understanding of the Qur'an and Sunnah, he did not allow his ideas to be wed to a particular school of thought, school of learning, or *ṭarīqah* (religious orthodoxy), and thus he encountered considerable opposition from Islamic seminaries and Islamic advocates of certain historical positions and traditions throughout his life. In this regard, perhaps his most controversial work was *Khilāfat wa-Mulūkīyat (Khilāfah versus Monarchy)*, 1953, in which he took on the difficult and unenviable task of explaining what caused the disintegration of the Islamic *khilāfah* after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ). In the book, he dared to hold the behavior of those who succeeded the Prophet (ﷺ), especially the ones who had the power to make decisions on behalf of the people, to the standard of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, which indicted the actions of some, and exonerated the actions of others. For doing this, Mawdūdī has been declared a heretic, a *kāfir*, a *murtadd*, a crypto-Shī'ī, and many other epithets too numerous to list here; however, were he umbilically wed to a particular version of history, as many are, he probably would not have been able to present the dispassionate analysis that he did.

**Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā** (1865–1935) – influential, and controversial, Islamic political thinker, scholar, and writer whose philosophical views on the nature and character of a modern Islamic state shaped the thinking of some others who succeeded him, such as Abū al-A'lá Mawdūdī, Sayyid Quṭb, and Ali Shariati. Born in what is now Lebanon (then part of Ottoman Syria), he, by the time he reached his late teens, became exposed to the thoughts and ideas of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (Asadābādī) and Muḥammad 'Abduh, through the latter's journal, *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā*. This initiated a lifelong attachment with 'Abduh and the enlightened Salafism he was espousing (not the reductionist kind in vogue today through the agency of Saudi Arabia). In 1897, Riḍā left Syria for Cairo, and began a collaboration



with ‘Abduh that produced *al-Manār*, a monthly journal of social and political commentary based on the Qur’an, to which he would contribute until the end of his life.

Departing from the ways of the traditional ‘*ulamā*’, whom he felt had stagnated, Riḍā advised both ordinary Muslims, as well as seasoned scholars, to approach, understand, and then interpret the sources of Islamic guidance for themselves. More controversial were his views on the theory of evolution; he endorsed Darwin’s theory about the origin of the species, adding that the origin of the human species from Adam (ﷺ) is derived from a Hebrew narrative of history and Muslims are not obliged to confirm it. Some of his detractors in an effort to dismiss the full spectrum of his work cite that, like ‘Abduh, he had ties with Freemasonry. However, more informed intimates of his suggest that whatever contact he might have had was nothing more than a brief flirtation.

Because he championed the standard of rule demonstrated by the Prophet (ﷺ) and al-Khilāfah al-Rāshidah, he was indignant, but nonetheless principled, in his criticism of the tyranny and corruption associated with centuries of Muslim rule, and the scholarly quietude and passive endorsement thereof. Though he did not call for a revolutionary approach to overturning the existing order (perhaps this had something to do with the fact that an impotent, in-name-only *khilāfah* was still around for much of his life), his strategic ideas on the Islamic state and the rejuvenation of the *khilāfah* impacted the thinking of some of his contemporaries, who developed them further. At the time he passed away, he was working on a *tafsīr* (a project he could not complete), *Tafsīr al-Qur’an al-Ḥakīm* (better known as *Tafsīr al-Manār*), which has proved invaluable for this author and the *The Ascendant Qur’an*.

629 Narrated by Anas ibn Mālik and recorded by Ibn Kathīr, al-‘Irāqī and others.

إِن أُقْتِي لَا جَنَمِعُ عَلَى ضَلَالَةٍ.

630 Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās and recorded by Ibn Mājah.

إِيَّاكُمْ وَالغُلُوَّ فِي الدِّينِ فَإِنَّمَا أَهْلَكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ الْغُلُوَّ فِي الدِّينِ.

631 **divine right** – theory asserting that authority comes directly from God, rendering one accountable only to God. Divine right was claimed by some ancient kings, popes, and especially 17th-century English and French rulers. For kings, the doctrine faded in England with William and Mary (1689), and in France with the French Revolution (1789–1799).



632 **Protestantism** – the generic term for expressions of Christian faith originating from the 16th-century Reformation as a protest against Roman Catholicism. Common characteristics include the authority of scripture, justification by faith alone, and the priesthood of all believers. The original groupings were those who followed Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Ulrich Zwingli, and the term now embraces most non-Roman Catholic and non-Orthodox denominations.

633 **commonwealth** – body politic founded on law for the common “wealth” or good (*al-ma'rūf*). Political philosophers of the 17th century, such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, used the term to mean an organized political community. In Britain it was specifically applied to the regime (the Commonwealth) of Oliver Cromwell (1649–1660). However, the term does not refer to the Commonwealth club of countries that comprise the colonial possessions of Britain.

**Titus Flavius Josephus** (37–100CE) – Jewish historian and general, born in Jerusalem. He became a Pharisee and commanded the Jewish forces in Galilee in their revolt against Rome in 66CE (which ended with the mass suicide at Masada). When captured, he gained the favor of the Roman emperor Vespasian and settled in Rome as a citizen. He wrote *Antiquities of the Jews*, an early history to 66CE; *The Jewish War*; and an autobiography. See also **Endnote 371** in Volume 5 and **Endnote 313** in Volume 7.

634 William H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, p. 1044.

635 **Gideon** – in the current Judaic understanding of the Old Testament, one of the judges of Israel, who led a small band of Israeli warriors; together, they succeeded in routing an invading Midianite army of overwhelming number in a surprise night attack.

**Deborah** – in today's understanding of the Old Testament, a prophet and judge (leader). She helped lead an Israeli army against the Canaanite general Sisera, who was killed trying to flee; her song of triumph at his death is regarded as an excellent example of early Hebrew poetry.

**Samson** (circa 11th century BCE) – a legendary hero of the tribe of Dan, purportedly the last of Israel's tribal leaders (“judges”) prior to Samuel and the establishment of the monarch under Saul. Stories in the Book of Judges, chapters 13–16, tell of his great strength, his battles against the Philistines, his 20-year rule, and his fatal infatuation with Delilah. When she cut his hair, breaking his Nazirite vow, he lost his strength, and was held by the Philistines until his hair grew back and he pulled down their temple upon them.

636 William H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, p. 1044.

**Tabernacle** – a movable sanctuary or tent; in early Israeli religion, the shelter for the Ark of the Covenant during the desert wanderings and conquest of Canaan, eventually replaced by Solomon's Temple. Elaborate instructions for its construction and furnishing are given in the Book of Exodus, but many consider these to derive from a later priestly source.

**cherubim** – plural for the singular form, *cherub*; in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, winged celestial creatures or beasts of various descriptions. Their roles include guarding the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden (Genesis, 3:24), being stationed on the cover of the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus, 25:18–22), adorning Solomon's Temple (1 Kings, 6:21–31), and accompanying the throne chariot of God (Ezekiel, 1:5–28).

637 *Ibid.*

**duke** – in the United Kingdom, a nobleman of the highest order; a royal duke is a son of the sovereign who has been given a dukedom.

**baron/baroness** – a title of nobility, ranking below viscount; the title held by most life peers (appointed members of British nobility whose title cannot be inherited). Originally the term was used for a tenant-in-chief (one who held his land directly from the sovereign).

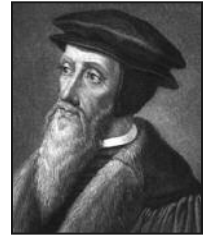
**bishop** – an ecclesiastical office, probably equivalent to pastor or presbyter in the New Testament, and thereafter generally an ordained priest consecrated as the spiritual ruler of a diocese in Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Episcopal Churches. In some other churches (for instance, certain Methodist Churches), the term is equivalent to "overseer" or supervising minister. The office was abolished by many Protestant churches in the 16th century Reformation, but in those churches that retain the title, it is considered to be essential for the identity of the church and the transmission of the faith. The issue of whether women as well as men may be consecrated bishop aroused great controversy at the end of the 1980s, especially following the first such appointment (Reverend Barbara Harris, as Bishop of Massachusetts) by the Episcopal Church of the United States in 1989.

638 **Martin Luther** (1483–1546) – religious reformer, born in Eisleben, Germany. He spent three years in an Augustinian monastery, obtained his degree at Erfurt, and was ordained in 1507. His career as a reformer began after a visit to Rome in 1510–1511, where he was angered by the sale of indulgences. In 1517, he drew up 85 theses on indulgences, which he nailed on the church

door at Wittenberg. Violent controversy followed, and he was summoned to Rome to defend his theses, but did not go. He then began to attack the papal system more boldly, and publicly burned the papal bull issued against him. An order was issued for the destruction of his books; he was summoned to appear before the Diet at Worms, and was put under the ban of the Empire. In 1525, he married a former nun, Katharina von Bora. The drawing up of the Augsburg Confession, where he was represented by Melancthon, marks the culmination of the German Reformation (1530). His translation of the Bible became a landmark of German literature. See also **Endnotes 29** and **174** in Volume 4; and **Endnote 120** in Volume 6.



**John Calvin** (1509–1564) – French theologian and religious reformer, founder of the Calvinist branch of the Protestant church. *The Institutes of Christian Religion* was the most systematic Protestant theological treatise of the Reformation. Although few Protestants now believe in predestination, Calvin's somewhat austere doctrine has greatly influenced the reformed religions, especially the state Protestantism of northern Europe and the Puritan movement in both Britain and North America, although some of the harsher features have softened with time. See also **Endnote 416** in Volume 7.



**Huldrych** or **Ulrich Zwingli** (1484–1531) – Ulrich Zuinglius in Latin; Protestant reformer, born in Wildhaus, Switzerland. He studied in Berne, Vienna, and Basel, was ordained in 1506, and became a chaplain to the Swiss mercenaries. In 1518, elected pastor in the Grossmünster in Zurich, he opposed the selling of indulgences, and espoused the Reformed doctrines, obtaining the support of the civil authorities. In 1524, he split with Martin Luther over the question of the Eucharist, rejecting every form of corporeal presence. War between the cantons followed, and he was killed in an attack on Zurich.



639 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhayli, *Al-Tafsir al-Munir*, Volume 6, p. 57 (originally recorded in Sunan Ibn Mājah).



# Glossary

*‘abd* – a person who complies with and conforms to Allah (ﷻ).

*‘adl* – generic fairness, justice, and impartiality in human relations.

**Ahl al-Bayt** – literally, the folks of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) household, in particular, Imam ‘Alī, his wife Fāṭimah al-Zahrā’, their oldest sons, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, and their direct descendants. Today, in practice, those who identify themselves as the devotees of Ahl al-Bayt, generally Shī‘īs, consider the pronouncements of the Imams to be an unerring representation of the Sunnah, and thereby second to the Qur’an.

**Ahl al-Kitāb** – Folks of the Book (also People of the Book); this expression refers to people who belong or belonged to any of a number of holy books or scriptures that were revealed by Allah (ﷻ) to the Prophets (ﷺ) throughout the course of history. Most notably among them are “Jews” and “Christians” who still have an affinity with or a “working relationship” with the Bible — Old or New Testaments.

**Ahl al-Sunnah wa-al-Jamā'ah** – *folks adhering to the Prophet's (ﷺ) Sunnah and identifying with the majority congregation of Muslims.* The term was coined and promulgated by King Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān, who by its use, sought to confer legitimacy on his tribal usurpation and corruption of Islamic political power. Today, these are the Muslims, generally Sunnīs, who regard the Hadith, particularly the Ṣaḥīḥs of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, to be an infallible representation of the Sunnah, and thereby at the same level of impeccability as the Qur'an. Scholars in this "tradition," by placing unimpeachable "faith" in the full compilation of hadiths, despite contradictions with the Qur'an and the authentic Sunnah in some instances, have come to rationalize tolerating the oppressive policies of unjust rulers.

**aḥzāb** – *confederates, regional confederation of military forces; usually refers to the alliance of mushrik armies that surrounded Madinah during the Battle of al-Khandaq (the Trench), otherwise known as the Campaign of al-Aḥzāb.*

**ākhirah** – *the end-life or afterlife; this expression refers to the hereafter, or afterlife, or life after death. In a more refined sense, this word alludes to the time-period that will follow the Day of Resurrection and Judgment.*

**'alim** – *learned person, intellectual, expert; this expression usually refers to scholars, particularly scholars who are well versed on Islamic matters.*

**al-amr bi-al-ma'rūf wa-nahī 'an al-munkar** – *to demand and authorize what is self-evidently right and to deconstruct and decommission what is self-evidently obnoxious.*

**Anṣār** – *supporters; in Islamic literature this word has to be understood in context. It could occur in reference to the Almighty — as in the Qur'an, anṣār allāh — or it could be in reference to the Prophet (ﷺ) — as in the Siraḥ, anṣār rasūl allāh. The word anṣārī is the singular of Anṣār.*

**‘aqidah** – *a set of key convictions; indoctrination.* In Islamic history, responding to challenges from Christianity and Zoroastrianism, it was a largely unfinished attempt by the Mu‘tazilah and other notable Islamic scholars (working individually, that is, not within the deliberative mechanism of a *shūrā* that such a task demands) to define the core elements of the Islamic theology.

**‘aṣabī** – *of or pertaining to ‘aṣabīyah.*

**‘aṣabīyah** – *any social expression of clan solidarity or exclusivity — ethnic, racial, national, sectarian — that presents itself with an air of supremacy or elitism, such that individual members are supported by the rest even if their actions are unjust, criminal, and oppressive.*

**al-asbāt** – *literally, the descendants.* In Israeli history, they are the bonding descendants of Prophet Ya‘qūb (ﷺ).

**āyah** – *illustration, miracle;* this could refer to Allah’s (ﷻ) illustration through revelation, that is, the verse(s) of the generous Qur’an; it can also refer to Allah’s (ﷻ) illustration of power and authority in the course of prophetic and social history (that is, an alteration of physical laws: miracles); and lastly, it could refer to Allah’s (ﷻ) illustration of power as an act of creation. Plural for *āyah* is *āyāt*.

**Banū Isrā’īl** – *the Children of Israel.*

**bashshir** – *break the good news.*

**bay‘ah** – *pledge of allegiance.*

**bid‘ah** – *a negative modification, a transposed variation;* this term in Islamic *fiqhī* (jurisprudential) discourse, especially by those who consider themselves *salafīs*, refers to additions or subtractions from the Prophet’s (ﷺ) Sunnah; especially additions. It has a derogatory undertone when used by some *salafīs*. They cannot visualize a *bid‘ah ḥasanah* (a positive modification) as a component of *ijtihād*.

**buhtān** – falsification.

**ḍa‘īfayn** – the dispossessed two; refers to women and orphans.

**dā‘ī** – a caller to Islam; an Islamic “missionary.”

**dīn** – ideological pattern and social prototype; this word is probably one of the most mistranslated words. The usual translation of the word is religion. But in a better understanding of Islamic terms the word *dīn* should carry within its meaning a lively prototype and a social system. As such a *dīn* could be man-made and in denial of Allah (ﷻ) or it may be in conformity with Allah (ﷻ) and in affirmation of Him.

**dirham** – silver currency at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ); a Makkan *dīnār* (gold coin) was worth 228 dirhams.

**diyāḥ** – blood money, indemnity, financial compensation for the bereaved relatives of a person who was killed or murdered.

**du‘ā’** – prayer or a reverent petition to Allah (ﷻ).

**dunyā** – world.

**fi ṣabilillāh** – on a course to Allah (ﷻ); for the cause of Allah (ﷻ).

**fiqh** – practical knowledge, legal knowledge, jurisprudence; the moral and legal understanding and interpretation of Islamic norms and laws within a particular generation or set of circumstances.

**fiqhī** – of or pertaining to *fiqh*.

**fitnaḥ** – trial and temptation, affliction; mainstream public opinion contradicting the truth and justice; seduction, sedition.

**ghulūw** – exaggeration, fanaticism, extremism, and zealotry.



**ḥadd** – limit; law of punishment enforceable only by the Islamic state.

**hadith** – a verbal or practical precedent of the Prophet (ﷺ); the simple linguistic meaning of the word is *speech*.

**al-Hadith** – the full body of hadith literature of the Prophet (ﷺ).

**Hajj** – *the Pilgrimage*; this is the annual meeting of the Muslims in Makkah during the last three months of the lunar year: Shawwāl, Dhū al-Qa‘daḥ, and Dhū al-Ḥijjah. The mass assembly of people during this annual congregation is Yawm ‘Arafāt, which is the 9th day of Dhū al-Ḥijjah — the day before ‘Īd al-Aḍḥá.

**al-ḥamdu lillāh** – thanks and praise to Allah (ﷻ).

**ḥaqq** – truth, veracity, validity; right (as in civil, human, natural, and inalienable rights).

**hijrah** – the resolute act of forsaking a domain of oppression for a social order in which justice and fairness prevail as a byproduct of its people yielding to Allah’s (ﷻ) command and counsel.

**hijrī** – referring to the Hijrah, or more generally to the Islamic calendar and the dates organized according to its lunar pattern of timekeeping.

**Hijrah, the** – the forced departure of Muhammad (ﷺ) from Makkah to Madinah; in a sense it was the Prophet (ﷺ) securing asylum from the Makkan *mushriks* and also his assumption of the role of leader, statesman, and ultimate decision maker, or imam, of the newly established Islamic State in Madinah.

**ḥākimīyah** – governance.

**al-ḥayāt al-dunyā** – worldly life.

**ḥukm** – a ruler’s control, jurisdiction, power, dominion, command authority, and/or sovereignty over the ruled.

**ḥukm al-‘ibād** – rule of the subjects of Allah (ﷻ).

**ḥukm allāh** – rule of Allah (ﷻ).

**ibtilā’** – trial through tribulation.

**ijtihād** – a legal Islamic assessment or edict; this word infers a rigorous scholarly effort to reach an informed opinion based upon the Qur’an and the Sunnah.

**imam** – leader; the word has both positive and negative usages in the Qur’anic text.

**īmān** – secure commitment, covenant; the word is virtually a distillation of *amānah* (trust) and *amn* (security).

**Islam** – resignation/yielding; this is a relationship with Allah (ﷻ) more than it is a religion. And it defines individuals and people who acquiesce and adhere to the will of Allah (ﷻ). Like other Qur’anic words, its specific meaning is refined within the context it is in. Generally speaking, it may be understood to refer to the “civic character” or “civilian status” of people once there is a full and meaningful *taqwā*-type orderliness with associated rules.

**‘iṣmah** – safekeeping, custody, protection. Linguistically, before the Qur’an was revealed, the word was understood to mean *protection* (from something) or *safeguarding* (against something); in the pre-Islamic context, one of the usages of the word designated a *security pact*. However, the Qur’anic use of an active form of the word (*ya’ṣimuka*), “...*wa-allāhu ya’ṣimuka min al-nās: ...and Allah safeguards you [O Muhammad] in contradistinction to [the rest of] humanity [which characteristically falls into sin]*” (5:67), expanded the range of its meaning. Consequently, with Allah’s

(ﷻ) protection from that which normally afflicts human nature (to err, to make mistakes, to sin), ‘iṣmaḥ also took on the attendant meaning of *innocence-cum-impeccability*, without losing its original intent of safeguarding against something harmful.

**istiḥsān** – *juristic preference.*

**ithm** – *an intentional human act that delays or retards Allah’s (ﷻ) approval and payoff; technically it is not equivalent to the English word sin.*

**‘izzah** – *majesty, self-sufficiency, and self-confidence; innocent pride.*

**jāhil** – *a constituent or citizen of a jāhiliyah.*

**jāhili** – *pertaining to jāhiliyah (ignocracy); ignocratic.*

**jāhiliyah** – *an era of governance without God, the age of systemic lack of scriptural guidance; it may be characterized as an “ignocracy” or “idiocracy.” It not only refers to the time preceding Muhammad (ﷺ), but also any time period in which Allah’s (ﷻ) dīn is overrun by other systems and establishments.*

**jihad** – *the ultimate effort and sacrifice; it is not holy war.* The word has a spectrum of meanings and applications that range from a struggle against the forces of evil within the self to a struggle against the forces of evil within the cosmos.

**jinn** – *unseen, intelligent beings; this is an independent species of intelligent and advanced life that will be held accountable, like humans, on the Day of Judgment. Their composition is from the substance of the fire, whereas man’s composition is from the substance of clay.*

**Ka‘bah** – *a cubic structure, an object of veneration; the black enshrouded cube at the center of al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, originally*

built by Ibrāhīm and Ismā'il (ﷺ) and around which Muslim pilgrims perform their *ṭawāf* (circumambulation).

**kaffārah** – *expiatory offering*. Some asset or value rendered to society by a person who violates certain Islamic laws. Examples are freeing a slave, fasting, feeding the poor, paying an amount of money where it is needed most, etc.

**kāfir** – *one who actively resists and refuses to comply with Allah (ﷻ)*; every person who enlists in *kufr* becomes a *kāfir*. Plurals are *kāfirūn*, *kāfirīn*, and *kuffār*; refer to the general definition of *kufr* below.

**kalālah** – *non-bloodline qualifiers for inheritance*.

**kalimah** – *word, phrase*; in this volume, it refers to the birth of Jesus (ﷺ) as a consequence of Allah (ﷻ) pronouncing the word of genesis, *kun* (*be*).

**khalifah** – *successor*; this word has its Qur'anic context. In this context man/humans are designated as Allah's (ﷻ) successors on earth. In post-prophetic Islamic literature it refers to those who succeeded the Prophet (ﷺ) as the leader of the Muslims.

**khalīl** – *confidant*.

**khaṭī'ah** – *a subliminal or unintentional error; a misdemeanor or crime resulting from a preceding misdemeanor or crime*.

**khilāfah** – *successorship; Caliphate*.

**al-Khilāfah al-Rāshidah** – *Rightly-Guided Caliphate*; this is typically identified by Sunnī historians as the short period of legitimate representative Islamic rule following the death of the Prophet (ﷺ) and preceding the first age of repressive, autocratic, and hereditary kings, started by the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān. Lasting 30 years, it comprised the administrations,

in order, of Abū Bakr (10–12AH), ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (12–22AH), ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān (22–34AH), ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (34–39AH), and al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī, the Prophet’s (ﷺ) grandson (40AH) who ruled for six months.

**kufr** – denial of Allah’s (ﷻ) authority and power; this becomes a “philosophy” or an “ideology.” There is a mental construct of ideas that argue against Allah (ﷻ) as Sovereign, Lawgiver, and Authority. There may be many expressions of this contrarian hypothesis and political orientation; but one thing in common among all of them — bar none — is their exclusion of Allah (ﷻ) as the Almighty and the ultimate Authority.

**kun** – Be! The word of genesis as pronounced by Allah (ﷻ).

**al-ladhīna āmanū** – those who are securely committed to Allah (ﷻ); the first among equals in an Islamic society.

**madhhab** – an [Islamic] rational pursuit in fulfilling the meanings of the Qur’an and Sunnah; usually refers to one of the Islamic fiqhī schools of thought.

**mahr** – bride-wealth, bride-right, or dowry; an Arabic word that approximates the meaning of the Qur’anic word, *ṣadāq*.

**al-manzilah bayna al-manzilatayn** – a position midway between *īmān* and *kufr*.

**ma‘rūf** – that which is self-evidently right and proper.

**masaha** – to wipe, to wipe out, to wipe clean, to blot out; to rub with oil, to anoint.

**masih** – one who is anointed.

**al-Masīḥ** – *the Messiah (or the anointed one); in reference to Jesus, son of Mary (ﷺ).*

**masjid** – *the place or area of sujūd (prostration); a mosque.*

**Masjid al-Dirār** – *a masjid the munāfiqs of Madinah built while the Prophet (ﷺ) and the combat-ready Muslims were away at the campaign to Tabūk. The “masjid” was built as a rival to al-Masjid al-Nabawī — as a staging area for kufr, for creating disharmony amongst the committed Muslims, and for the strategic planning of those who had all along been at war against Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ). On his way back from Tabūk, the Prophet (ﷺ) received orders to raze the offensive structure to the ground.*

**ma‘šūm** – *refers to someone who or something that is safeguarded, for instance, one who is innocent-cum-impeccable (such as a prophet). Refer to the definition of ‘iṣmaḥ above.*

**millah** – *constituency, or the people of a country, or a community of persons bound by a common heritage; most of the time this word is used in the Qur’an to refer to the consolidating of the popular will around Abraham and his Prophetic descendants (ﷺ).*

**mu‘āhidūn** – *those who have a treaty on amicable terms with the committed Muslims.*

**mu‘allaqāt** – *the pre-Islamic linguistic masterpieces of poetry hung around the Ka‘bah in Makkah.*

**mu‘awwiqūn** – *obstructionists.*

**muhājir** – *one who embarks on a hijrah.*

**Muhājirūn** – *people forced out of their homelands; in particular, these are people who are forced out because of their scriptural convictions, strenuous efforts, and energetic attempts at socializing scrip-*

ture. Generally in Islamic literature, this term refers to the Prophet's (ﷺ) companions who made the Hijrah from Makkah to Madinah. The word *muhājir* is singular for *Muhājirūn*.

***mujāhid*** – *an individual active in jihad; see jihad above. Its plural is mujāhidūn or mujāhidīn.*

***mujtahid*** – *one who develops an ijihād.*

***mu'min*** – *every person who is firmly and securely committed to Allah (ﷻ); a bearer of imān. See imān above.*

***munāfiq*** – *a dual loyalist; those “Muslims” who are outwardly performing their part in a ritual Islam, but when it comes time to honor this Islam in its struggle and sacrifices, they show inclination toward the anti-Islamic camps, states or powers around. They feign Islam, while in reality they owe their allegiance to the representatives of kufr. See nifāq below.*

***murtadd*** – *one who regresses into jāhiliyah after freely agreeing to yield to Allah's (ﷻ) commandments. Contrary to the way the word is inappropriately translated into English by partisan orientalist who have tirelessly sought to misrepresent Islam, a murtadd is not an apostate, whose renunciation begins and ends with a strictly theological change of heart. A murtadd is one who seeks to politically, ideologically, and militarily abandon the unity of Islam in favor of whatever brand of 'aşabiyaḥ (exclusivist group solidarity) he belonged to before Islam. See also riddaḥ below.*

***mushrik*** – *an individual(s) and people(s) who actively and institutional-ly diminish the authority of Allah (ﷻ) and promote the authority of others. They equate worldly powers with Allah (ﷻ) and they denigrate Allah (ﷻ) as “one among many” deities and authorities. The feminine singular is mushrikaḥ; feminine plural is mushrikāt.*

**muttaqī** – one who is actively conscious of Allah’s (ﷻ) power presence and hence is always on the alert and on the defensive pertaining to Allah (ﷻ); this word should never be translated as pious or fearful, as it is known nowadays.

**nafkh** – exhalation.

**najwá** – secret, surreptitious, and conspiratorial meeting.

**Naṣārá** – theological Christians or political Christians (defined by context).

**Naṣrānī** – a theological or ideological Christian (defined by context).

**naṣr** – Allah’s (ﷻ) help in the form of victory over His enemies.

**niḥāq** – disloyalty, hypocrisy, feigning allegiance.

**nushūz** – an attitude of condescension from the wife toward the husband or from the husband toward the wife resulting in an emotional breach of love and care.

**qaḍā’an** – a makeup rak’ah or ṣalāh for an obligatory one that was not performed during its established daily time frame.

**qā’idūn** – those who are sedentary, inactive, apathetic, and lethargic.

**qaṣr** – shortening, curtailment, diminution, abridgment, or reduction; refers here to the license given to abridge the time spent in the required ṣalāhs for those who are engaged in warfare, where the breach of security is a constant threat.

**qiṣāṣ** – requital, retribution: a penalty that corresponds to the crime.

**qist** – social justice administered through the employment of institutional mechanisms such as courts, regulations, and legislative action.



**qitāl** – fighting, warring, combat.

**qiyām** – rising, standing; the portion of a Muslim's *ṣalāh* that is performed while he is standing.

**qiyās** – comparison, correspondence, analogy, or deduction; in *fiqhī* methodology, this is considered to be one of the sources of Islamic (interpretive) legislation, and is relied upon if the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the consensus of the *Ṣaḥābah* are not explicit on a particular issue. It is applied to a situation where a known injunction from the first three sources “corresponds” to a new situation for which clear guidance from the initial three sources is not immediately obvious. The Hanbali, the *Zāhirī*, the *Ja'farī*, and the (extant) *Ismā'īlī* Schools of Islamic Law have rejected *qiyās* as a source of legislation; however the *Mu'tazilaḥ* accepted and utilized it.

**al-Quds** – *The Consecrated City*; this, obviously, is the name of Jerusalem in the Arabic language.

**qunūṭ** – despair, desperateness, disheartened; a *du'ā'* that is made by Muslims during their *ṣalāh* to beseech Allah's (ﷻ) help and assistance during desperate and highly insecure times.

**Quraysh** – refer to **Endnote 257** in Volume 7 for a brief history of the dominant power constituent of Makkah.

**Qurayshī** – having to do with the *Quraysh*.

**qurrā'** – those who recite the *Qur'an* according to its rules for proper vocalization and intonation (*tajwīd*); plural of *qārī'*.

**quwwaḥ** – power.

**Rabī' al-Thānī** – the fourth month of the Islamic *hijrī* calendar.

**rak‘aḥ** – bowing down (during the physical or bodily performance of the *ṣalāḥ*); one unit of the *ṣalāḥ*, which ends with the *rukū‘*.

**Rasūl-Allah** (ﷺ) – the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); also called Allah’s Apostle (ﷺ), Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) or simply the Prophet (ﷺ). When this is used in Islamic literature, the majority of times it is in reference to the final messenger, Muhammad (ﷺ).

**rawāfiḍ** – dissenters, defectors, renegades; an epithet used by Sunnī exceptionalists to calumniate the Shi‘aḥ.

**ribā** – usury; a particular type of nefarious and vicious financial transaction that generates money from lending money.

**riddaḥ** – a regression into *jāhiliyaḥ* after freely agreeing to yield to Allah’s (ﷻ) commandments.

**rīḥ** – wind.

**risālah** – written communication, letter, or message; scriptural substance delivered to humanity/community by a prophet from Allah (ﷻ).

**rūḥ** – vital essence, soulfulness.

**rūḥun minhu** – a *rūḥ* from Him, that is, Allah (ﷻ); refers to Jesus, son of Mary (ﷺ).

**rukṅ** – support, foundation; basis. The plural form, *arkān*, refers to the cardinal (fundamental) principles that make up the Islamic *dīn*.

**rukū‘** – genuflection; unlike biblical genuflection, this is when a Muslim in his *ṣalāḥ* bends down at the waist (a half *sajdaḥ* or prostration) and praises Allah (ﷻ).

**ṣadāq** – bride-wealth, bride-right, or dowry; plural of *ṣadāq* is *ṣaduqāt*. See also *mahr*.

**Ṣaḥābah** – the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ).

**ṣā'iqah** – *thunderbolt, bolt of lightning.*

**sajdah** – *prostration; plural: sujūd.* This is one of the motions of ṣalāh, when a praying Muslim puts his forehead on the ground and glorifies the Almighty.

**salaf** – *predecessors, ancestors, forebears;* the early predecessors after the Prophet (ﷺ) comprising the generation of the Companions (the Ṣaḥābah) and the first two generations of the Tābi'ūn.

**salafī** – *a person who attributes himself to the first generations of Islam;* today, this word is used to describe a certain segment of Muslims who are, in general, fast and loose with accusing other Muslims of *kufr*. Some would say the *salafīs* are the “next generation” of Wahhābīs.

**ṣalāh** – *expressing a concentrated and devotional relationship with Allah (ﷻ);* Muslims do this five times a day: *Fajr, Zuhr, 'Aṣr, Maghrib, and 'Ishā'.*

**ṣalāh al-jamā'ah** – *any ṣalāh that is discharged by a group of two or more praying in unison, and headed by an imam;* usually refers to Muslims praying together in a congregation.

**ṣalāh al-khawf** – *a ṣalāh that is offered to Allah (ﷻ) at times of fear or panic, such as when an enemy attacks.*

**al-salāmu 'alaykum** – *peace be unto you.*

**shahādah** – *testimonial;* like other words, the variation in meaning depends on the context the word is used in. This word refers mostly to two concepts in Islamic literature. The first is the article of faith: *Ashhadu an lā ilāha illa Allāh, wa-ashhadu anna Muḥammadan rasūlu Allāh,* which means “I bear witness [testify] that there is no deity/authority [worthy of conformity] except Allah, and I bear wit-

ness [testify] that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.” The second concept related to the word *shahādaḥ* is *martyrdom*.

***shaqīqatān*** – two sisters who have the same father and mother.

***shar‘ī*** – of or pertaining to the *Shari‘ah*. When this refers to the definition of certain words, it alludes to a specific meaning derived from the *Shari‘ah*; for instance, the word *ṣalāḥ* literally means *blessing*, but its *shar‘ī* meaning refers to the physical and mental communion with Allah (ﷻ) that Muslims are required to perform five times a day.

***shari‘ah*** – legal course; more technically, the codes, procedures, and laws that take society in the direction of prosperity and survival. The word originally meant — before the Qur’an was revealed — to take a path to a body of fresh water; now it generally refers to the body of Islamic law.

**Shari‘ah, the** – the Islamic legal system.

**Shī‘ī** – literally, a follower; the intimate group around the Prophet (ﷺ) inclusive of his family and his bloodline descendants. This was a term coined by Mu‘āwiyah to single out and sideline the supporters of Imam ‘Alī as a cult of personality that had separated and deviated from the rest of the Ummah.

***shirk*** – the act and implementation of equating or associating others with Allah (ﷻ) as divine and as authority; in other words the displacement of allegiance in man’s heart and the dislocation of authority in man’s life. See also *mushrik* above.

***shūrā*** – a consultative assembly convened for the purpose of participatory decision-making.

***Sīrah*** – biography of the Prophet (ﷺ); this is an account of his lifetime, particularly its struggle aspect, during his years in Makkah and Madinah.

**sunan** – *social laws*. This is the word's Qur'anic meaning in so far as such laws are the pattern of history, human activities, and nature. *Sunan* also refers to a compilation of hadith collected and organized by a *muhaddith*, one who searches hadith literature with a view to organizing and verifying hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ). It is the plural of *sunnah*.

**Sunnah, the** – *the lifestyle pattern of the Prophet (ﷺ)*; or the final set of social laws imparted by Allah (ﷻ) to humanity through the agency of Muhammad (ﷺ).

**Sunnī** – *literally, one who adheres to the Sunnah*; the core group around the Prophet (ﷺ) inclusive of his companions and their non-errant descendants. This is an abbreviated form of a term invented by Mu'āwiyah — *ahl al-sunnah wa-al-jamā'ah* — to give legitimacy to his usurpation and takeover by force of the highest office in the Islamic State.

**sūrah** – *ensemble of a body of themes in the Qur'an*; there are 114 *sūrah*s in the glorious Qur'an.

**tafsīr** – *exegesis*; simple interpretation or critical interpretation of the meanings of the Qur'an.

**ṭāghūt** – *concentration and abuse of excessive power*; this word is usually used to describe governments and regimes that, having accumulated wealth and resources, find themselves in a “superpower” or “hyper-power” position in the world. The exercise of this kind of centralized power makes these governments rivals (in their own consciousness) to the power and authority of Allah (ﷻ). This aggregation and engrossment of power becomes satanic.

**tahkīm** – *arbitration*; in Islamic history, this refers to the arbitration that took place between the forces of Imam 'Alī and the confederates of would-be King Mu'āwiyah after the Battle of Ṣiffin. When the results of the arbitration declared Mu'āwiyah to be the new

leader of the Muslims, the Khawārij emerged from Imam ‘Alī’s camp, and declared the whole process and its results to be null and void. From that point on, they continued an organized resistance against the Umayyad usurpers of power, finally succeeding with others in ending the Umayyad dynasty 120 years later.

**takfīr** – *the declaration that someone is a kāfir*; usually refers today to the methodology employed by Muslims with a post-modern *salafī* (Anglo-Wahhābī) orientation who easily and uncritically declare other Muslims, usually the oppressed ones, to be *kāfirs*.

**takfīrī** – *having to do with takfīr, or one who does this.*

**tanẓīl** – *expressed or denotative meaning*; refers to the specific revelation received by the Prophets (ﷺ), but not the inferred meaning of some of the *āyāt*.

**taqlīd** – *imitation, tradition, custom*; the practice of less-knowledgeable Muslims accepting the scholarly opinions and legal decisions of most-knowledgeable Muslims — the *faqīhs* and imams.

**taqwá** – *the feeling and thinking of Allah’s (ﷻ) immediate power presence in the affairs of man that makes a person avoid Allah’s (ﷻ) corrective interference in man’s individual and social life.*

**ṭarīqah** – *way, method, procedure, system; creed.* It refers, usually within the Sufi domain, to an Islamic training program that is endorsed or founded by an Islamic scholar or mystic.

**tawhīd** – *monotheism, singular divine authority*; this combines in its connotational and denotational meanings all the consolidated and indivisible traits and understandings of Allah (ﷻ). In *His* self *He* is one; in *His* attributes *He* is one; therefore, in any way the human mind tries to understand *Him*, *He* remains exalted — as *He* distinguishes *Himself* in *His* own words.

**‘ubūdiyyah** – the human status of conforming to and obeying Allah (ﷻ).

**ummaḥ** – the consolidation of a collective will.

**Ummah, the** – (uppercase reference is always to) the Islamic ummaḥ.

**wa-‘amilū al-ṣalīḥāt** – exerted efforts of merit; this is an honorific phrase that usually follows the phrase *al-ladhīna āmanū* in the Qur’anic discourse. The implication is that there is a synergy between a secure commitment to Allah (ﷻ) and the exertion of efforts of merit and rectitude.

**al-wa’d wa-al-wa’id** – literally, the promise and the threat; reward and punishment.

**wafāḥ** – a suspension or cessation of life; a conscious but not necessarily a biological cessation of life.

**walāyah** – the meaning of the word depends on the context. The Qur’anic usage of the word means *obeisance, reverence, and deference to Allah* (ﷻ). Historically, however, the word is interpreted to mean devotion to Imam ‘Alī’s family and hatred by some of their adversaries (this definition specifically pertains to the context of the ‘Alawīs).

**waṣīyah** – an inheritance will.

**ya‘ṣimuka** – He [Allah] safeguards you [Muhammad]; refer above to the definition of ‘iṣmaḥ.

**yataḥākamū** – they defer to the rule (governance) of...; refer above to the definition of ḥukm.

**yatawalla** – they ally themselves with...; refer above to the definition of walāyah.

**yuhājirū** – he abandons the abode of *kufr* for the domain of *īmān*; refer above to the definition of *hijrah*.

**zāhir** – literal, denotative, manifest.

**zakāh** – freely paying money as an act of financial maturity; usually the word is translated as *almsgiving* or *charity*, which not at all renders correctly its original meaning. Many times in the divine Writ the word *zakāh* is preceded by *aqāma*, *yuqīmūna*..., which means that this giving of money has to be institutionalized or regulated.

**zālimī anfusihim** – those who inflict abuse/injustice on themselves.

**zulm** – injustice/oppresion; this is the practical result, in human societies, of deleting Allah (ﷻ) as the only Authority and only Power in life. Many times in the divine Writ Allah (ﷻ) refers to *shirk* as being a massive expression of *zulm*. For those who are confused about who the *mushriks* are, they only need to look at parts of the world where there is colossal injustice and identify the operators of that injustice.



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